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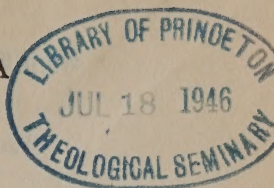








THE CATHOLIC UNIVERSITY OF AMERICA  
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# The Parables of the Kingdom

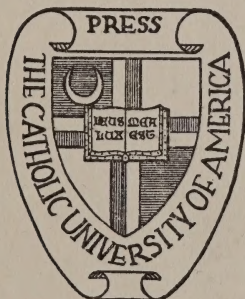
**A Presentation and Defense of the Absolute Mercy  
Theory of the Kingdom Parables with a Review  
and Criticism of Modern Catholic Opinion**

A DISSERTATION

*Submitted to the Faculty of Sacred Theology of the  
Catholic University of America in Partial Ful-  
fillment of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Doctor of Sacred Theology*

BY

✓  
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TO  
MY FATHER AND MOTHER



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## FOREWORD

THE publication of this work marks the completion of four years of post-graduate study in Sacred Theology and Sacred Scripture at The Catholic University of America. For this opportunity of pursuing advanced studies in the Sacred Sciences the writer owes a great debt of gratitude to his Most Reverend Ordinary, Thomas E. Molloy, D.D., Bishop of the Diocese of Brooklyn. Throughout these years of study His Excellency has manifested a kindly and personal interest in the author's work and has been most encouraging, considerate, and generous in his regard. For this personal and gracious considerateness the writer wishes to express his appreciation.

The writer is indebted to the Reverend Dr. Joseph L. Lilly, C.M., for his scholarly direction of this work. Dr. Lilly's wise counsel has been of immeasurable help in the undertaking and development of the subject. The manuscript has been read and approved by the Reverend Drs. Patrick W. Skehan and John P. Weisengoff. The author wishes to thank them for their careful reading and helpful suggestions.

The primary purpose of this dissertation is to present and defend the absolute mercy theory of the kingdom parables in the light of modern Catholic opinion. The compass of our work is therefore limited. We do not intend to discuss all the questions that would naturally find consideration in a complete and exhaustive treatment of the purpose of the parables of our Lord.

We do not intend to examine in detail the opinion of the early Fathers of the Church. Nevertheless, what we shall say in the course of our discussion of the justice theory (chap. 5), will give the reader a fair understanding of the trend of traditional thought in regard to the purpose of the parables.

Further, we do not consider it within the proper scope of our thesis to prove the authenticity of the Scriptural texts pertinent to our subject. We are presuming that the Gospels afford us a faithful account of the kingdom parables used by our Lord and of the state-

ment wherein Christ apparently explains the purpose of the parables (Matt. xiii. 11-15; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10). Consequently, we shall not attempt to refute the recent theories propounded by Jülicher and by the *Formgeschichte* (form-criticism) school. A complete examination and detailed refutation of Jülicher's theory will be found in Buzy's *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques* (pp. 2-230). Lagrange's article, "La parabole en dehors de l'Évangile," (*RB* 1909, pp. 198-212, 342-367) and Vosté's *Parabolae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi* (Vol. I, pp. 15-53) may also be profitably consulted. The theory of Jülicher confines its attack upon the reliability of the Gospel accounts to the texts of the parables. The opposition of the *Formgeschichte* school is much more comprehensive. For recent criticisms of this *Formgeschichte* school we may refer to McGinley's *Form-Criticism of the Synoptic Healing Narratives* (esp. pp. 4-27, where there is a brief refutation of the main tenets of the school) and Donlon's article, "The Form-Critics, the Gospel, and St. Paul" (*CBQ* 1944, pp. 159-179, 306-325).

Finally, we may note—in regard to more conservative non-Catholic opinion—that the difference of opinion found among Catholic authors on the question of the purpose of the kingdom parables prevails also among those non-Catholic authors who accept the Gospel accounts of the parables as reliable records. This fact will become evident from various quotations we shall adduce from the works of non-Catholic scholars, although we do not pretend to be offering a complete presentation even of conservative non-Catholic opinion in this dissertation.

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE OBSCURITY OF THE KINGDOM PARABLES

JESUS CHRIST came into the world to bring salvation to the souls of men. "I came that they may have life, and have it more abundantly" (John x. 10).<sup>1</sup> ". . . the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 56). His very name—Jesus, which means Savior—was chosen to indicate the purpose of His coming. The angel said to St. Joseph: ". . . and thou shalt call his name Jesus; for he shall save his people from their sins" (Matt. i. 21).

The accomplishment of man's salvation was not to depend on the efforts of Christ alone. Man's co-operation would be required. "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' shall enter the kingdom of heaven; but he who does the will of my Father in heaven shall enter the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. vii. 21). "But if thou wilt enter into life, keep the commandments" (Matt. xix. 17). Man would have to co-operate with the efforts of Christ if he wished to save his immortal soul.

Christ, therefore, in His teaching laid down a definite program which men were to follow in order to attain salvation. This program contained directives pertaining to man's belief as well as to his conduct. The central point in this entire program was the commandment of love. The pre-eminence of this virtue was emphasized by Christ very plainly and repeatedly. "And behold, a certain lawyer got up to test him, saying, 'Master, what must I do to gain eternal life?' But he said to him, 'What is written in the Law? How dost thou read?' He answered and said, 'Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with thy whole heart, and with thy whole soul, and with thy whole strength, and with thy whole mind; And thy neigh-

<sup>1</sup> New Testament quotations throughout this work will be taken from the Confraternity of Christian Doctrine edition, and Old Testament quotations from the Douay version. Exceptions will be indicated.

bor as thyself.' And he said to him, 'Thou hast answered rightly; do this and thou shalt live' " (Luke x. 25-28).<sup>2</sup>

Christ took care that there would be no misunderstanding about the full compass of this commandment of loving one's neighbor. In the same passage of the Gospel from which we have just quoted, Christ defined the important term, neighbor. The young lawyer had continued his questioning: "And who is my neighbor"? (Luke x. 29). Christ's answer was the parable of the Good Samaritan (Luke x. 30-35). No one could possibly mistake the lesson of this parable. Our neighbor is everyone, everyone without any exception—including even those whom we would ordinarily be inclined to consider as our enemies.<sup>3</sup>

Moreover, Christ was not content merely to lay down for men a program of conduct which would lead them to eternal happiness. He went further. Christ was not only a teacher. He was also a perfect exemplar. The lessons that He taught, He put into practice in His own conduct. "... learn from me, for I am meek and humble of heart" (Matt. xi. 29). After washing the feet of the Apostles at the Last Supper He said: "For I have given you an example, that as I have done to you, so you also should do" (John xiii. 15). On that same solemn occasion He said of the example He had always given of the commandment of love: "A new commandment I give you, that you love one another: that as I have loved you, you also love one another" (John xiii. 34).

If we wish to go further and select particular instances of Christ's love for men, the Gospels are replete with such evidence.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Matt. xxii. 34-39 and Mark xii. 28-34, where Christ teaches that the first and greatest commandment is to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. At the Last Supper Christ proclaimed that the observance of the commandment of love is the distinguishing characteristic of the true Christian: "By this will all men know that you are my disciples, if you have love for one another" (John xiii. 35). Further, Christ revealed that the commandment of love will be the standard used on the day of judgment to distinguish the elect from the reprobate. Cf. Matt. xxv. 31-46.

<sup>3</sup> Cf. also Matt. v. 44-48: "But I say to you, love your enemies, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who persecute and calumniate you, so that you may be children of your Father in heaven, who makes his sun to rise on the good and the evil. and sends rain on the just and the unjust. . . ."

The greatest example of Christ's love was His supreme act of self-immolation on Calvary. "Greater love than this no one has, that one lay down his life for his friends" (John xv. 13). "I am the good shepherd . . . and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John x. 14, 15). It was out of love for the souls of men that Christ died on the cross. By this sacrifice of His life He made salvation available to all men—the salvation that men would attain by their own co-operation, essentially by observing the great commandment of love.

Even before His great act of self-immolation on Calvary, Christ showed His love for men continually throughout His life on earth. St. Peter, who was so close to Christ during the years of His public ministry, could say later: ". . . and he went about doing good" (Acts x. 38). How often did Christ speak words of comfort and encouragement to those who were troubled and in affliction! "Go in peace." "Thy sins are forgiven thee."<sup>4</sup> He offered rest and refreshment to those who were weighed down by the troubles and cares of life. "Come to me, all you who labor and are burdened, and I will give you rest" (Matt. xi. 28). He never wearied of manifesting His love for men in works of kindness and mercy. The Evangelists often repeat that it was because He was "moved with compassion" that He performed His miracles.<sup>5</sup> He was always ready to help the suffering, the needy, and the afflicted.<sup>6</sup>

<sup>4</sup> Cf., e. g., Mark ii. 5; v. 34; Luke v. 20; vii. 48, 50; viii. 48.

<sup>5</sup> While the miracles of Christ were testimony of His divine mission, at the same time they were deeds of mercy. At first, there seems to be one exception to this rule, namely, the cursing of the fig-tree (Matt. xxi. 18, 19; Mark xi. 12-14, 20, 26). But on further examination we discern Christ's merciful purpose in this miracle also. "His whole object was, by a parable in action, to show to men the fate reserved by Him for those whom He compares to barren trees, which, having no vitality except in appearance, bear leaves and not fruit. Of this severe lesson, a tree was made the concrete example, while His deeds of mercy were wrought upon men." J. Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, Vol. II, pp. 161, 162.

<sup>6</sup> So far we have briefly considered: Christ's mission of salvation and His great love for men; and Christ's demand that men must co-operate with His efforts, especially by observing the supreme and universal commandment of love. These ideas represent the general theme of this work, and they are considerations which will be constantly recurring.

Christ's message was a message of help and salvation. Not only the content of that message, but even the very method of teaching that Christ used showed His great love for men. Christ's preaching shows that He had only one objective in mind—the welfare of His listeners. His one desire was that the people should be attracted by His words, should listen to Him, and should be converted. It was most natural, therefore, that He should use the method of teaching to which the people were accustomed. He used the popular and familiar method which appealed to the imagination. His language was rich in symbolism, imagery, and story. Particularly characteristic of His style of preaching was His use of the popular parable method. As Callan says, "Parables have always been a very common mode of expressing truths among Oriental peoples; hence, our Saviour in using them, accommodated Himself to the customs and manners of His hearers."<sup>7</sup>

This reference to the parables of Christ brings us to the proper subject of our discussion. The Gospels show that the people who listened to our Lord found some of His parables obscure. No exegete denies this fact. Our first conclusion would naturally be that this obscurity in Christ's teaching forms an exception to His usual manifestation of goodness and mercy. Obscurity in speech, we should say, is a means of hiding a message, and is hardly evidence of the speaker's consideration for his audience. However, this first judgment deserves further investigation. And that is the object of our study. We shall attempt to determine the reasons why Christ sometimes spoke to the people in obscure parables. Briefly, there are two opinions. Some authors maintain that Christ was motivated

<sup>7</sup> C. Callan, *The Four Gospels*, p. 85. St. Jerome: "Familiare est Syris et maxime Palaestinis ad omnem sermonem suum parabolas jungere: ut quod per simplex praeceptum teneri ab auditoribus non potest, per similitudinem exemplae teneatur." *Commentaria in Evangelium Sancti Matthaei*, on Matt. xviii. 23, MPL 26, 132. R. Trench: "Nor less is it certain that the illustrating of doctrines by the help of parables, or briefer comparisons, was greatly in use among the Jewish teachers, so that it might almost be said of them as of Him, that without a parable they spoke nothing. . . . It was not in the newness of the forms, but in the newness of the spirit, that the transcendent glory and excellency of Christ's teaching consisted." *Notes on the Parables of our Lord*, p. 49. Cf. also L. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, Vol. II, p. 419.

in His use of these parables by His infinite justice. They maintain that our Lord used the obscure parables in just punishment for the refusal of the people to profit by His previous teaching, which was clear and simple. This opinion is known as the justice theory.<sup>8</sup> Other authors hold that it was rather the love and mercy of Christ that prompted Him to use these parables. They maintain that even these obscure parables were an instance of the merciful kindness and love of our Lord. Under the circumstances they were the best means of imparting His teaching about the kingdom of God. This second theory is known as the mercy theory of the parables. It is this mercy theory which we shall endeavor to explain and defend in this work. Our plan will be to present first the positive explanation of the theory (chaps. 2, 3, and 4), and then to answer the objections brought against this theory by the defenders of the justice theory (chaps. 5, 6, and 7).

Before we enter upon the discussion of our thesis itself, there are several preliminary questions that we ought first to consider. They are: (1) the nature of the parable and its relation to allegory; (2) the determination of the particular parables that are the object of our study; and (3) the occasion on which these parables were delivered.

(1) A parable is a narrative told for the sake of illustrating some truth. A teacher wishes to impart some particular lesson, and he chooses to present the lesson under the form of a story. The parable, therefore, is evidently a popular and simple method of teaching.<sup>9</sup> To take an example of a parable spoken by Christ, we may

<sup>8</sup> Of the opposition between the strict justice theory of the parables and the merciful character of our Savior, Buzy says: "C'est l'antinomie de l'extrême Bonté et d'une rigueur dépassant toute conception." D. Buzy, *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 231. However, as we shall see later (chap. 5), all authors who defend the justice theory add modifications to their view. These modifications emphasize the mercy and goodness of Christ in various ways and temper the severity of the theory.

(We may note here that all italics within quotations throughout this work will be those of the authors being quoted.)

<sup>9</sup> "Le but normal des paraboles est de rendre une vérité sensible à l'intelligence; le choix de ce mode s'explique encore mieux s'il s'agit de vérités surnaturelles, peu accessibles à la foule." M.-J. Lagrange, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 102. Cf. also Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 25; L. Fonck, *The Parables of the*

recall the story of the Good Samaritan. Our Lord had just proclaimed the lesson that the greatest of all the commandments is to love God and to love our neighbor as ourselves. Immediately the question was put to Him: "And who is my neighbor?" In answer Christ told the story of the Good Samaritan:

A certain man was going down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and he fell in with robbers, who after both stripping him and beating him went their way, leaving him half-dead. But, as it happened, a certain priest was going down the same way; and . . . he passed by. And likewise a Levite also . . . passed by. But a certain Samaritan as he journeyed came upon him, and seeing him, was moved with compassion. And he went up to him and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. And setting him on his own beast, he brought him to an inn and took care of him. And the next day . . . (Luke x. 30-35).

The people who listened to this parable of the Good Samaritan knew the object of the story. It was the precise determination of the term, neighbor. They knew also the particular circumstance which added so much point to the lesson of our Lord, namely, the enmity that existed between the Samaritans and the Jews, an enmity that was as vehement as it was mutual. The listeners could not fail, therefore, to understand the lesson of Christ. The lesson was that the term, neighbor, includes everyone without any exception. We must love even those who are supposedly our enemies.

Because of the subject of our thesis we must say more about the simplicity of the parable. The parable is always clear in itself. This simplicity follows from its very nature. It is a story which needs to be understood only in its general purport. The story as a whole is used as a comparison to illustrate some particular lesson. "It is a comparison of relationship and not of details. There may chance to be some suggestive resemblance in details, but this is immaterial to the real purpose of the illustration. . . . In each similitude there is one main comparison and one application, one truth that is unfolded." <sup>10</sup>

*Gospel*, p. 22; I. Vosté, *Parabolae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 148.

<sup>10</sup> W. Moulton, "Parable," *HDCG*, Vol. II, p. 313.

However, while the parable is simple in itself, it may become obscure through accidental circumstances. Obscurity will result, for example, if the application of the story is not known. "No parable is clear until we know to what it is to be applied."<sup>11</sup> Obscurity will result also if the lesson of the parable is difficult to understand, whether the lesson be difficult in itself or the mental preconceptions and moral dispositions of the lessons render it so. "Indeed, just as a comparison cannot clarify if the object of the comparison is not known or is poorly understood, so the teaching of the parable, which likewise deals with its object only indirectly, cannot succeed in shedding light in a domain altogether obscured by gross errors."<sup>12</sup> It is to be observed that in these cases the obscurity does not result from the parable itself but derives from accidental circumstances. In the parable that we have just quoted, the parable of the Good Samaritan, none of these accidental circumstances are present to obscure the parable. The application is known, since the story is Christ's answer to the question, "And who is my neighbor?" The lesson in itself is not too difficult to comprehend. And, as far as the preconceptions and predispositions of the listeners are concerned, the opposition is not of such a nature as to prevent the understanding of the lesson. The parable, therefore, was easily understood.

If simplicity is thus a characteristic of the parable, it is not always a characteristic of a closely related teaching device, namely, the allegory. An allegory is usually more difficult to understand than a parable. A parable compares one complete situation or one whole set of circumstances with another; and Maldonatus, therefore, says of the interpretation of the parable:

<sup>11</sup> Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 319. Elsewhere the same author says: "Tant qu'on ne sait pas à quoi s'applique l'exemple ou fable, l'esprit demeure en suspens; l'auditeur ne sait pas où le conteur veut en venir." "La parabole en dehors de l'Évangile," *RB*, 1909 (VI), p. 210.

<sup>12</sup> "En effet, tout comme une comparaison ne peut rien éclaircir si le 'tertium comparationis' est inconnu ou mal compris, ainsi l'enseignement parabolique qui n'aborde non plus son objet qu'indirectement, ne pouvait arriver à faire la lumière dans un domaine tout obscurci par de grossières erreurs." A. Charue, *L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, p. 210. Cf. also Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 104.

Now it is sufficient to point out that usually, in parables, persons are not compared with persons, and parts with parts, but the whole situation is compared with the whole situation. . . . Therefore he labors in vain who anxiously tries to discern how persons correspond with persons, and parts with parts. The whole structure of the thought is to be considered, and the whole meaning is to be drawn from the whole parable: lest, divided into parts, the meaning be lost.<sup>13</sup>

In other words, the parable being a comparison of one complete set of circumstances with another, the details retain their own proper significance. They serve only to help in painting the general picture. They do not, taken individually, contain a lesson within themselves. An allegory, on the other hand, contains a multiple lesson, and the details contain part of the lesson within themselves. An allegory is a succession of metaphors or unexpressed comparisons, these metaphors at the same time being co-ordinated among themselves and related to the same general subject. A multiple lesson is contained in these various comparisons; and consequently multiple keys are needed to understand all the metaphors and thus grasp all the elements in the general teaching of the allegory. As Lagrange says, comparing the parable and the allegory: "The allegory is a succession of metaphors wherein each object suggests the idea of another object; the parable is a comparison which sets forth two situations, each of which has its distinct object."<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> J. Maldonatus, *Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelistas*, Vol. I, p. 236. Cf. also P. Batiffol, *L'enseignement de Jésus*, p. 20.

<sup>14</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 200. Cf. also Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 26. Buzy is very clear in his explanation of the distinction between the comparison and the metaphor, and between the parable and the allegory (*op. cit.*, pp. 26-39). He says: "La métaphore est le transfert d'un mot du sens propre au sens figuré. . . . Or, l'allégorie n'est autre chose qu'une série coordonnée de métaphores ou de termes figurés. . . . Il est facile en regard de montrer que la comparaison conserve aux mots leur sens naturel. . . . Or la parabole et la fable ne sont qu'une comparaison développée. . . . On saisit dès à présent que la différence essentielle entre la comparaison et la métaphore, la parabole ou la fable et l'allégorie, consiste dans la différence du sens propre et du sens figuré. Lorsque je dis: cet homme est brave comme un lion, je garde aux deux substantifs leur sens obvie: l'homme est un homme, le lion, un lion; j'ai fait une comparaison. Mais si j'ajoute parlant du même: c'est un lion, évidemment le lion n'est plus

As an example of an allegory used by Christ we may recall the figure of the Vine and the Branches:

I am the true vine, and my Father is the vine-dresser. Every branch in me that bears no fruit he will take away; and every branch that bears fruit he will cleanse, that it may bear more fruit. . . . I am the vine, you are the branches. He who abides in me, and I in him, he bears much fruit; for without me you can do nothing. If anyone does not abide in me, he shall be cast outside as the branch and wither; and they shall gather them up and cast them into the fire, and they shall burn. . . . (John xv. 1ff.)

This figure is so well adapted to convey the lesson of our Lord that it scarcely calls for any explanation. Whatever difficulty may be left after a careful reading, is explained by these words of Abbot Marmion:

When the Eternal Father sees that a soul, already united to His Son by grace, resolutely desires to give herself fully to Christ, He wills to make life abound in her and to increase her capacity for receiving it. To do this, He Himself enters into this work of renunciation and detachment, because that is the preliminary condition of our fruitfulness. He prunes away all that could prevent the life of Christ from producing its full effects; all that is an obstacle to the divine sap.<sup>15</sup>

So far we have been speaking of the parable in its pure form. Very often, however, the parable is not found in its complete purity. Very often it contains an admixture of allegorical elements. And

qu'un homme à bravoure de lion: j'ai fait une métaphore. Pour le même motif, la péricope du ferment est une parabole, tandis que la péricope de la vigne est une allégorie." *Op. cit.*, pp. 28-31. Cf. also Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 25.

<sup>15</sup> D. Marmion, *Christ the Life of the Soul*, pp. 194, 195. The close relationship between the terms, the kingdom of God and the spiritual life or the life of the soul, will be explained later (chap. 2, note 1).

Buzy finds four allegories in the Synoptics: "A côté de ces paraboles, les Synoptiques nous offrent quatre allégories: le Semeur, l'Ivraie, le Filet et les Vignerons homicides." *Op. cit.*, p. 188. Moulton says, after indicating that the Sower is not an unmixed allegory: "The Wicked Husbandmen and the Tares are better examples of allegory; but even in those there are several features without allegorical significance." *Art. cit.*, p. 315.

this is true of many of the parables of our Lord. Exegetes are agreed that many of Christ's parables were not pure parables.<sup>16</sup> The explanation that Christ chose to give of two of His parables is the clearest proof that His parables often contained allegorical elements. These two parables that Christ explained were the parables of the Sower (Matt. xiii. 18-23) and of the Weeds (Matt. xiii. 36-43). As Fonck says: "The explanations which our Lord appended to certain parables prove that very often at least, the relation of the image to the truth was not limited to one point merely, but could be extended in manifold ways to different parts of the parable."<sup>17</sup>

This admixture of allegorical elements in the parables of Christ has led to a difference of opinion in parable interpretation—a difference of opinion that dates from the very beginning of biblical exegesis. The reason is that some authors are ready to go much further than others in finding allegorical elements in the parables.<sup>18</sup> Knox points out the real reason for the dispute: "Instincts will always differ as to how much the language of a given parable can be

<sup>16</sup> Speaking from an aprioristic point of view, Batiffol says: "On répondra, secondement, que, si la parabole, telle que Jésus la pratique avec le peuple, est essentiellement une comparaison, et si nous n'avons pas le droit de chercher un enseignement allégorique dans ce qui n'est qu'une comparaison, ce n'est pas un motif pour interdire à Jésus d'allégoriser parfois, d'autant que la différence entre la parabole et l'allégorie n'est souvent qu'une nuance." *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Cf. Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 287.

<sup>17</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, p. 43. Cf. also Knox, *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, p. 6.

<sup>18</sup> "Interpreters have differed importantly on the question whether everything in the parable is of its essence (the 'kernel') or anything is mere machinery and accident (the 'husk'). There is an obvious rule. We must not pass over as unmeaning any detail without which the lesson would cease to be enforced. But shall we insist on a correspondence at all points, so that we may translate the whole into spiritual values, or may we neglect whatever does not seem to compose a feature of the moral to be drawn? St. John Chrysostom (In Matt., lxiv.) and the School of Antioch, who were literalists, prefer the latter method; . . . St. Augustine, who holds of Origen and the Alexandrians, abounds in the larger sense; . . . St. Jerome in his earlier writings follows Origen; but his temper was not that of a mystic and with age he becomes increasingly literal. Among modern commentators the same difference of handling appears." W. Barry, "Parables," *CE*, Vol. XI, p. 461. Cf. also Trench, *op. cit.*, p. 30.

pressed in detail, how large an allowance has to be made for mere added circumstance which rounds off the story.”<sup>19</sup> Nevertheless, Vosté’s rule seems to offer a wise norm for the interpretation of the secondary elements in the parable: “The obvious literal meaning of the parabolic account is in possession; the allegorical or metaphorical—inasmuch as it is an exception—must be proved.”<sup>20</sup>

(2) Our next endeavor will be to determine which are the obscure parables that are the object of our study.<sup>21</sup> Certainly, not all the parables of Christ were obscure. Many of them, not only in themselves but also in their accidental circumstances, were simple

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 6.

<sup>20</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 84. Buzy likewise says: “Le sens propre possède, tant qu’on n’a pas une raison positive de l’écarter. Si on l’écarter sans motif, on peut se montrer ingénieux et sembler heureux, on n’en est pas moins arbitraire.” *Op. cit.*, p. 51. Plummer warns against two extremes: “In the interpretation of parables we have to be on guard against the opposite dangers of ignoring important features, and attempting to make all the details mean something.” A Plummer, “Parable (in NT)”, *HDB*, Vol. III, p. 664.

<sup>21</sup> Authors are not agreed as to the number of parables in the Gospels. Prat gives the reason for the disagreement: “Les diverses manières de concevoir et de définir les paraboles évangéliques font que le nombre en est différent suivant les auteurs.” *Jésus Christ*, I, 550. The reason for the difference of opinion is explained more fully by Vosté: “Vox παραβολή *quinquagies* occurrit in Novo Testamento: semper quidem in Synopticis; exceptis vicibus duabus in epistula ad Hebraeos. . . . Minime tamen pericopae omnes, quae verae parabolae sunt, semper hoc nomine explicite designantur. . . . Sensus varium habet vox παραβολή sicut hebraica vox *mashal*. . . . Cum usus vocis *parabolae* apud Synopticos non sit uniformis neque exclusivus de determinato genere litterario, cum ex altera parte limites inter meram comparisonem ac protractam narrationem, quae vere est parabola, indicari nequeant, hinc sequitur impossibilitas statuendi numerum certum parabolarum Domini Nostri.” *Op. cit.*, pp. 54, 56, 58. Prado indicates the extent of the disagreement: “Auctorum qui de hoc argumento scripsere, hi circa 30, illi circa 70, immo et 100, parabolas computant.” I. Prado, *Novum Testamentum* (Praelectionum Biblicarum Compendium), p. 124. At the same time we must remember that Christ probably used many other parables besides those that are actually recorded in the Gospels. Cf. John xxi. 25. In this connection Prado says: “Non omnes Christi parabolas a sacris scriptoribus fuisse collectas luculenter ostendit exiguus earum numerus, cum compertum aliunde sit Magistri sermonem parabolis fuisse consitum (Matt. xiii. 3, 34. Mc. ii. 33s).” *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

and easy to understand. They were certainly understood immediately by all Christ's listeners.<sup>22</sup> The Good Samaritan, the Lost Sheep, the Prodigal Son, the Rich Man and Lazarus are only some examples of parables that can scarcely be described as obscure.

The obscurity of the parables pertains especially to the group of parables known as the parables of the kingdom of God. This group comprises the seven parables found in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel and an eighth parable which is proper to the Gospel of St. Mark (iv. 26-29). This last parable is added to the others because in form and content it obviously belongs to the group, and according to St. Mark it was delivered on the same occasion as the other seven. These eight parables are: the Sower, the Weeds, the Mustard Seed, the Leaven, the Treasure, the Pearl, the Net, and the Seed that Grows of Itself.<sup>23</sup> It is this group of eight kingdom parables that we shall have in mind, primarily, throughout the course of this discussion on the obscurity of the parables.<sup>24</sup>

We say "primarily" because we do not mean to exclude all the other parables of Christ from the considerations of our thesis. Besides this small group of parables there are others which are concerned with the kingdom of God. In fact, all the parables can

<sup>22</sup> Cf. Fonck, *op. cit.*, p. 28.

<sup>23</sup> Van Steenkiste says of the division of the parables: "Tres parabolarum series distinguere possumus: quarum prima eas tantum complectitur quae ad regnum coelorum, eius leges, pretium, propagationem et consummationem reguntur; quaeque in hoc capite 13 Matthaei leguntur omnes, praeter unam de semine sponte germinante, Mc. vi. 26-29. . . ." J. van Steenkiste, *Sanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, Tomus Primus, p. 539. Barry: "An external but instructive division parts them into three groups; those delivered about the Lake of Galilee (Matt. xiii.); those on the way up to Jerusalem (Luke x.-xviii.); those uttered during the final stage of our Lord's life, given in either Gospel; or parables of the kingdom, the Christian's rule; the judgment on Israel and mankind. In various ways commentators follow this arrangement, while indicating more elaborate distinctions." *Art. cit.*, p. 462.

<sup>24</sup> Authors refer particularly to this group of eight parables when they discuss this question of the purpose of the parables. Cf., e.g., Fillion, *op. cit.*, II, 408; van Steenkiste, *op. cit.*, I, 545; A. Goodier, "The Parables," *New Testament*, p. 181. They often use the two terms, parables of the lake and kingdom parables, interchangeably in the course of their discussions.

rightly be considered as being concerned with the kingdom at least in a general, indirect, and remote way. We find Fonck, for example, dividing the parables into three groups, all under the general heading of the kingdom of God: "I. Parables of the kingdom in its general development, its nature, its working; II. Parables of the members of the kingdom of Heaven and their obligations; III. Parables of the Head of the kingdom of Heaven and His position amongst the members."<sup>25</sup>

Furthermore—and this is the more important point—there is good reason to hold that other parables besides this group of eight parables are concerned with the kingdom in an immediate, direct, and dogmatic way. Thus Fonck includes 28 parables in the first of the groups into which he divides the parables.<sup>26</sup> And Buzy says: "But far from being confined to these discourses (the discourses of the Lake), the series of dogmatic parables is extended throughout the entire course of the public ministry."<sup>27</sup>

There is reason, then, to consider other parables besides the group of eight parables as being concerned with the kingdom in a direct and dogmatic way. This point is important; because it will become evident later (chap. 3) that obscurity is a characteristic especially of those parables which treat of the kingdom in a dogmatic way. Durand therefore rightly says; in determining the particular parables that are the object of the question of the purpose of the parables:

... it is question of the parables of the lake (so called from the place where they were delivered), those which are read in the thirteenth chapter of St. Matthew. We can add to them some other parables, spoken in analogous circumstances, that is, before the crowd and not in private; having for their object the

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 70. Buzy: "Après en avoir scruté le texte et le contexte, l'exégète le plus prévenu ne peut s'empêcher de reconnaître que celles qui n'instruisent pas directement du Royaume (fondation, accroissement, importance, composition, parousie, etc.), traitent les devoirs des sujets du Royaume, considérés non pas comme hommes ou comme citoyens, mais formellement comme sujets de ce Royaume." *Op. cit.*, p. 20.

<sup>26</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 822, 823.

<sup>27</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 402.

mysteries of the kingdom of God, and not a lesson of the moral order. Such are several of those spoken at Jerusalem, during the last week of our Saviour's life, notably the parable of the unfaithful vine-dressers.<sup>28</sup>

Therefore, while we shall have in mind in this thesis particularly the specific group of eight kingdom parables, and while we shall use only these parables for purposes of illustration (in chap. 3), we do not mean to exclude all the other parables of Christ from our consideration.

(3) The last question that we have proposed for consideration in this introductory chapter is the determination of the occasion on which the kingdom parables were delivered. According to the Gospels, the eight parables were delivered on the shore of Lake Genesareth and all on the same day.<sup>29</sup>

Some authors maintain that the Gospels here give us the actual order of events. Thus Fillion says:

<sup>28</sup> A. Durand, "Paraboles de l'Évangile," *DAFC*, Vol. III, col. 1570. In reference to the parables that are the object of our question, Prat says: "c'est ce genre de comparaisons développées sous forme d'histoire, que Jésus racontait avec tant de charme pour donner un corps aux vérités de l'Évangile: le Semeur, l'Ivraie, le Sénevé, la Perle et le Trésor caché, les Talents ou les Mines, les dix Vierges, les Invités au banquet, les Vignerons homicides et autres semblables." "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études* 1913 (135), p. 201.

Goodier's contention that the obscurity of the parables pertains only to the eight kingdom parables (*art. cit.*, p. 180) follows from his denial that the other parables contain a dogmatic teaching about the kingdom apart from their obvious moral lesson (cf. *art. cit.*, p. 183).

Holzmeister believes that all the unexplained parables of Christ were obscure: "Zunächst ist zuzugeben, dass eine unerklärte Parabel für gewöhnlich unverständlich ist." "Vom angeblichen Verstockungszweck der Parabeln des Herrn," *BI*, 1934 (15), p. 325. However, he admits, with reference to even the unexplained parables: "Die Grundidee musste vielfach alsbald wenigstens im allgemeinen erfasst werden." *Art. cit.*, p. 329.

<sup>29</sup> This question of when the eight kingdom parables were delivered loses some of its importance because of the conclusion just reached, i.e., that the object of our thesis is to include more than just these eight parables. However, what we shall say here about the chronological order of events in the Gospels will be helpful also in the understanding of several questions that we shall treat later (especially in chaps. 5 and 6).

It was therefore a whole sermon that Jesus then delivered under this form. According to the most probable view, this is where we should place the eight parables of the Kingdom of Heaven, composing the first of the three groups mentioned above and apparently all delivered on the same day. This fact seems to follow from the close connection between them in the matter of the subject treated. They form an unbroken chain, all the parts linked together, mutually explaining and supplementing each other. This undeniable unity leads us to suppose they were delivered at the same time. Further, from end to end of his account, St. Matthew shows that he purposed following a strictly chronological order. This appears from the care with which he joins all the sections together by means of connective formulas.<sup>80</sup>

Many other authors, however, hold that this group of parables was not delivered on the same occasion. Fouard, for example, says:

To us, it seems scarcely probable that the seven parables, as collected together here by St. Matthew, were pronounced in presence of but one audience, and all on the same day. Jesus had too intimate an acquaintance with the sordid and groveling dispositions with which he had to deal, to overwhelm and fatigue their minds in this manner without giving them leisure to meditate upon the truths concealed beneath those mystical words. Furthermore, St. Matthew informs us that the Master uttered a great number of parables at this time (Matt. xiii. 34); so the seven now connected in this chapter are probably those which struck the writer as being more forcible than the rest—those which would give us the clearest notion of “the kingdom of God.”<sup>81</sup>

It is evident, even from these two quotations, that the question whether the eight parables were delivered on the same occasion is

<sup>80</sup> L. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, II, 407, 408. Cf. also van Steenkiste, *op. cit.*, I, 545.

<sup>81</sup> C. Fouard, *The Christ the Son of God*, Vol. I, p. 306, n. 4. Cf. also Vosté, *op. cit.*, I, 152. Prat: “Il est peu probable que toutes ces paraboles aient été prononcées le même jour. Si saint Matthieu, selon sa méthode, les réunit en un chapitre, saint Luc ne place en cet endroit que la seule parabole du Semeur. Les assertions du Sauveur et des évangélistes sur le but, la fréquence, et l’insuccès des paraboles se comprennent mieux si ce genre de prédication eut une certaine durée.” *Jésus Christ*, I, 323.

only part of the larger problem of Gospel chronology, namely, whether the Evangelists intended to adhere to a strict chronological order and whether St. Matthew collected the sayings of Christ into several sermons. Naturally, we cannot here enter into this question at great length. It will suffice for our purposes merely to indicate the general trend of thought among authors on this problem of Gospel chronology. Thus Lattey says, speaking of the discourses of Christ:

If we turn our attention to the sayings which in the main are not in *Mark*, we shall not fail to notice (speaking in general, as I must) that whereas in *Matthew* they are collected with consummate art into magnificent orations, in *Luke* they are found scattered up and down the gospel. The conclusion is obvious, and generally accepted, that St. Matthew has not always followed the chronological and geographical order of Christ's sayings, which is often more easily to be recovered from *Luke*. Such disregard on St. Matthew's part is recognized by the Biblical Commission, and does not of course imply formal error, for the simple reason that he nowhere pledges himself to follow any definite method. . . . But if, as seems practically certain, these sayings of our Lord were originally scattered up and down as we find them in *Luke*, then St. Mark could choose to omit them, just as St. Matthew could choose to collect and arrange them.<sup>32</sup>

Lagrange sees little hope of restoring the correct chronological order in the Gospels: "Even though we may not be aware of their (the Evangelists') divergences, we seem left continually under the suspicion that they have little regard for chronological order. It appears to be a case of: 'Guess if you can, and choose if you dare.'"<sup>33</sup>

<sup>32</sup> C. Lattey, "The Synoptic Gospels," *New Testament*, pp. 109, 110. Maldonatus: "Saepe monuimus, cum Evangelistae Christi conciones recitant, non esse laborandum, quo modo inter se sententiae cohaereant." *Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelistas*, I, 158.

<sup>33</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, p. xv. Speaking in a less general way, Lagrange says: "Indeed it would be impossible to write a Life of Jesus that could stand up against the objections of the critics if we were obliged to consider the connecting together of various teachings of our Lord into one great sermon, or the repeated use of the formula 'after that,' as formal declarations that such was the real sequence of events." *Op. cit.*, p. xiv. Mangenot: "Les évangélistes, et saint Marc en particulier, ont souvent groupé les faits ou les discours parallèles ou semblables." *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, p. 241. Cf. also Lattey, *art. cit.*, p. 95.

We can with good reason, therefore, believe that the eight kingdom parables were not all delivered on the same day at the lakeside. It is very probable that they were delivered by Christ on various occasions, and that St. Matthew has collected them into one discourse.

## CHAPTER II

### A CONTRAST IN MESSIANIC IDEAS

JESUS CHRIST came to preach and to establish the kingdom of God. "From that time Jesus began to preach, and to say, 'Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand'" (Matt. iv. 17). "To the other towns also I must proclaim the kingdom of God, for this is why I have been sent" (Luke iv. 43). Sometimes in His preaching our Lord used the term kingdom itself; but more frequently He did not make explicit use of the term. Nevertheless, all the parables as well as all the rest of His teaching were actually concerned with the kingdom of God. As Swete says: "The kingdom of God or of Heaven . . . covers more adequately than any other single phrase the whole field of our Lord's teaching. . . . Our Lord began His Galilean ministry by announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand. This idea was at once the starting-point of His teaching and its basal truth."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> H. Swete, *Studies in the Teaching of our Lord*, pp. 21, 160. Cf. also L. Fonck, *The Parables of the Gospel*, pp. 53, 64. The term, kingdom of God or kingdom of heaven, is found more than 100 times in the Gospels. St. John prefers the term, life, to the term, kingdom. However, this is merely a distinction in terminology. The kingdom of God is primarily the reign of God over the souls of men. In more theological language, therefore, it is the abolition of sin and the infusion of grace. Grace being the spiritual life of the soul, the terms, kingdom and life, become synonymous. Cf. Swete, *op. cit.*, p. 160.

It will be helpful throughout this work to keep in mind Vosté's comprehensive definition of the kingdom of God, according to the teaching of the Synoptic Gospels and the rest of the New Testament writings: "Exercitium potestatis regalis aeternae Dei, *in animis* per liberam submissionem legi Dei, Creatoris et Salvatoris; *in mundo* per foundationem et incrementum societatis fidelium, quae est *Ecclesia*; *in altera vita* demum per firmam unionem electorum cum Deo (*vita aeterna*) et incorporationem eorumdem in Ecclesiam triumphantem, cuius caput Christus est. "*Parabolae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, pp. 115, 116. Cf. also H. Felder, *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, pp. 180, 181.

Moreover, at the time that Christ appeared on earth the Jewish people were expecting the kingdom. This fact will be demonstrated repeatedly as we proceed. For the present it will suffice to indicate several significant texts that are found at the very beginning of the Gospel narrative. When St. John the Baptist began to preach to the people, he exhorted them: "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). This text indicates that the kingdom of heaven was a subject familiar to the people and that they were awaiting the announcement of the coming of the kingdom.<sup>2</sup> The definite proof of such an expectation is found in another text: "... all were thinking in their hearts of John, that perhaps he might be the Christ" (Luke iii. 15).<sup>3</sup> Again, the Sanhedrin sent an official delegation to find out whether John was the Messiah. He answered: "I am not the Christ" (John i. 19). St. Luke tells us that Simeon was "looking for the consolation of Israel" (Luke ii. 25), and that Anna "spoke of him to all that were awaiting the redemption of Israel" (Luke ii. 38). Therefore Fillion rightly says: "What

<sup>2</sup> The terms, kingdom of God and kingdom of heaven, are really synonymous. "The reverence of the Jews for the name of God caused them in many instances to use the word 'heaven' . . . instead of 'God.' Hence 'kingdom of Heaven' was the popular term for the 'kingdom of God.' It cannot surprise us that our Lord employed a term familiar to the people nor that the Evangelist who wrote in Aramaic for the Jewish Christians of Palestine should alone have retained the expression whilst the others used 'kingdom of God' as more intelligible to the pagans who had become Christians. St. Mark and St. Luke by simply using 'kingdom of God' in these passages, show us at the same time that according to their conception both terms have the same meaning." Fonck, *op. cit.*, pp. 65, 66. Cf. also Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 65; G. Dalman, *The Words of Jesus*, I, 91ff.; E. Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 171.

<sup>3</sup> The terms, Messiah (or Christ) and kingdom of God, are correlative, since it is the essential function of the Messiah to establish and rule the kingdom. Cf. Felder, *op. cit.*, I, 153. In this connection, Frey observes: "Le contenu tout spirituel de la notion du royaume se reflète dans le concept du roi messianique, car le roi est correlative au royaume. Aussi Jésus, pour faire comprendre en quel sens il est Messie, voulut-il avant tout montrer comment il entendait le royaume. On peut même dire qu'il subordonna entièrement la révélation de sa messianité à celle de son royaume; la première reçoit toute sa signification de la seconde." J. Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 275.

most impresses one in studying the religious conditions of the Jewish people during the period we are considering, is the intense and almost unanimous eagerness with which the coming of the Messiah was awaited. The Gospels as well as profane documents describing that time reveal this expectation ceaselessly, under every form.”<sup>4</sup>

Briefly, the Jewish people were expecting the kingdom of God, and Christ had come to preach and establish that kingdom. Why, then, was His teaching not accepted? The answer is, simply, that Christ and the Jews had totally different ideas about the nature of the kingdom. This opposition in Messianic concepts was the basic cause of all the difficulty that Christ experienced in His preaching throughout the years of His ministry in Palestine. It was the real reason why He was ultimately rejected and put to death. “It can be said without too much exaggeration that all the misunderstanding between Jesus and the Pharisees, between Saint Paul and the Jews, was due to this fact, that the Judaism of the teachers was orientated toward a false understanding of the kingdom of God. . . .”<sup>5</sup> To understand this basic opposition in Messianic ideas it will be necessary for us to examine the Messianic ideas that the Jews entertained at the time of our Lord.

The Jewish people expected that the kingdom would be established by the Messiah, who would be the descendant of David. This belief was founded on the promises of the Old Testament.<sup>6</sup> Nathan

<sup>4</sup> L. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, Vol. I, p. 195. Cf. also Frey, *art. cit.*, p. 138.

<sup>5</sup> “On dirait sans trop d'exagération que tout le malentendu entre Jésus et les Pharisiens, entre saint Paul et les Juifs, est né de ce que le Judaïsme des docteurs s'était orienté vers une fausse intelligence du règne de Dieu. . . .” *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 68.

<sup>6</sup> In regard to the sources of our knowledge of Jewish Messianic expectation at the time of Christ Fonck rightly says: “The Old Testament, the Judaic Apocrypha, and other writings of the time immediately before or after the birth of Christ, and lastly the allusions which we meet with occasionally in the New Testament show us what was the belief in Israel at the time of our Lord concerning the kingdom of God.” *Op. cit.*, p. 53. Frey, referring to the Old Testament, the New Testament, the apocalypses, and the rabbinical writings as the source-material for our concept of Jewish Messianism at the time of our Lord, says: “. . . il se dégage de tous les documents, pris ensemble, certaines

the prophet had said to David: "And thy house shall be faithful, and thy kingdom for ever before thy face, and thy throne shall be firm for ever" (2 Kings vii. 16). This promise was repeated by other prophets of the Old Testament. Isaiah, for example, had prophesied concerning the Messiah and the kingdom: "His empire shall be multiplied, and there shall be no end of peace; he shall sit upon the throne of David, and upon his kingdom; to establish it and strengthen it with judgment and with justice, from henceforth and for ever: the zeal of the Lord of hosts will perform this" (Isaiah ix. 7).

The Jewish people believed that this kingdom would be extended beyond the borders of Israel. The Jews of the time of Christ expected deliverance from the yoke of Rome and the extension of the power and glory of Israel throughout the world. Again, the Old Testament had spoken of this universal extension of the kingdom. The Psalmist, for example, had said in reference to the Messiah and the kingdom that he would establish:

And he shall rule from sea to sea, and from the river unto the ends of the earth. Before him the Ethiopians shall fall down: and his enemies shall lick the ground. The kings of Tharsis and the islands shall offer presents: the kings of the Arabians and of Saba shall bring gifts: And all kings of the earth shall adore him: all nations shall serve him (Ps. lxxi. 8-11).<sup>7</sup>

Thus far we have presented only a very general picture of Jewish Messianic expectations. Because of the importance of this question for the purposes of our thesis, we must enter into more detail. Much of our material, we may note, will be drawn from the Jewish apoca-

*lignes maîtresses qui paraissent bien avoir constitué les grands courants de la pensée juive.*" *Art. cit.*, p. 138.

In this present chapter, while making some reference to the testimony of the Old and the New Testaments, we shall consider more particularly the witness of the apocalypses and the profane historical records. In chapter 4 we shall consider more in detail the evidence of the New Testament.

<sup>7</sup> Old Testament texts of this kind—which represent the Messiah as a worldly king and conqueror, and which describe the kingdom in terms of material splendor—present a difficulty. We shall consider this question later (chap. 4, complementary note E).

lypses. These apocalypses were Jewish literary compositions dating approximately from the time of Christ. "They bridge the literary gulf which stretches between the Old and the New Testaments, and by reason of their markedly Messianic expectation, which is their common characteristic, they are, as it were, a prolongation and epilogue of the canonical prophets, in addition to being the prologue of the Gospel."<sup>8</sup> Usually in these works the kingdom and the Messiah are described in reference to each other; the reason being, as we have already mentioned, that it is the essential function of the Messiah to establish the kingdom of God. There is one exception to this rule, namely, the apocalypses composed at the time of the first Asmoneans about the middle of the second century before Christ. The apocalypses of that period speak of the kingdom of God with little reference to the Messiah.<sup>9</sup>

The Jewish people believed that the coming of the Messiah would be preceded by the return of Elias. Elias was to come down from heaven and bestow the royal unction upon the chosen king. God had promised through the prophet Malachias: "Behold I will send you Elias the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord" (Mal. iv. 5). In the New Testament there is a statement of the Apostles which shows that the Scribes, the official teachers of the Law, held that the coming of Elias would precede

<sup>8</sup> P. Batiffol, "Apocalypses apocryphes," *DDLB*, Vol. I, col. 757. Whenever we refer to the apocalypses in general, we shall be using the term with the comprehension that Lagrange describes: "Nous avons ici en vue: le livre d'Hénoch, le livre des secrets d'Hénoch, le livre des Jubilés, divers passages des Livres sibyllins, l'Assomption de Moïse, les Testaments des douze patriarches, l'Apocalypse d'Esdras, appelée aussi le quatrième livre d'Esdras, l'Apocalypse de Baruch, l'Apocalypse d'Abraham, quoique nous n'ayons l'intention d'insister ensuite que sur les ouvrages antérieurs à la prédication de l'Évangile." *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 72. Cf. also Felder, *op. cit.*, pp. 163, 164.

<sup>9</sup> "Ainsi les Testaments des Douze Patriarches, comme les Jubilés, ne font qu'une très petite place—s'il en font une,—au Messie personnel. Ils n'ont pas transporté cette espérance dans la maison des Asmonéens, parce qu'ils se contentaient d'un messianisme collectif de progrès continu sous l'égide de la dynastie." Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 129. Frey refers to the "rôle effacé" of the Messiah "dans le Livre des Songes d'Hénoch (83-90), dans les Jubilés, et dans Philon d'Alexandrie." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 138.

the appearance of the Messias. The Apostles asked our Lord: "Why then do the Scribes say that Elias must come first?" (Matt. xvii. 10).

The Jewish people held complex and obscure ideas about the actual origin of the Messias. There was, first, the definite belief that he would be of human origin and that he would be born of the family of David. This was the teaching of the Old Testament; and the apocalypses as well as the New Testament attest to this belief of the people.<sup>10</sup> As Buzy-Barton say, referring to the time of Christ:

There is no proof that at this period the doctrine of the Messiah's davidic descent had been obscured or perverted. In the second century B.C., it had been whittled down by such works as the Book of Jubilees and the Testament of the Twelve Patriarchs, but, in the century that followed, the Psalms of Solomon had reaffirmed it in all its force. See, for example, Ps. xvii. 5, 23; also the fourteenth blessing of the Shemone-Esre. In Gospel times the doctrine was commonly received. See John vii. 41.<sup>11</sup>

The last reference of Buzy-Barton, to the Gospel of St. John, concerns the question that was asked by some of the Jews in reference to the Messiahship of Christ: "Can the Christ come from Galilee? Does not the Scripture say that it is of the offspring of David, and from Bethlehem, the village where David lived, that the Christ is to come?"

Along with this belief in the human and Davidic origin of the expected Messias, there existed other, rather obscure ideas about his origin. "All were agreed that he was to be a scion of the House of David, but the opinion was almost universal that there was to be mystery about his first appearance."<sup>12</sup> We read in St. John's Gospel, where the reference is to our Lord: "Some of the people of Jerusalem were saying, ' . . . Can it be that the rulers have really

<sup>10</sup> For the testimony of the Old Testament, cf. 2 Kings vii. 16; Isaías ix. 7; Micheas v. 2; etc. For the New Testament, cf. Matt. ii. 4, 5; xxi. 9; xxii. 42; etc. The teaching of the apocalypses on this point will be seen in the various quotations that we shall soon adduce from these works.

<sup>11</sup> *The Life of St. John the Baptist*, p. 100, note 1.

<sup>12</sup> J. Arendzen, "The Jewish Background to the New Testament," *New Testament*, p. 26.

come to know that this is the Christ? Yet we know where this man is from; but when the Christ comes, no one will know where he is from'” (John vii. 26, 27). Somewhat less obscure was the opinion of those who held that the Messiah would be of super-terrestrial origin. The Assumption of Moses witnesses to this belief: “And then His kingdom shall appear throughout all His creation. . . . Then the hands of the angel shall be filled, who has been appointed chief, and he shall forthwith avenge them of their enemies” (x. 1, 2).<sup>13</sup> The Parables of Enoch describe the Son of Man as having an existence previous to his earthly career: “And at that hour the Son of Man was named in the presence of the Lord of Spirits, and his name before the Head of Days. Yea, before the sun and the signs were created, before the stars of the heavens were made, his name was named before the Lord of Spirits” (xlvi. 2, 3).<sup>14</sup>

<sup>13</sup> We shall quote the apocalypses according to Charles, *Apocrypha and Pseudepigrapha of the Old Testament—Vol. II: Pseudepigrapha*. In reference to the date of composition of the Assumption of Moses, Frey says: “. . . il aura composé son livre peu après la mort d'Herode, en tout cas peu après la déposition d'Archelaus (4 av. J.-C.—apr. J.-C.). . . . C'est l'opinion qu'admettent à peu près tous les critiques depuis vingt ans.” “Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament,” *DDL-B-SUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 405.

<sup>14</sup> Lagrange notes: “Comme l'a très bien vu Martin, ‘être nommé d'un nom’ signifie ‘exister,’ comme le prouve l'usage constant des Assyriens.” *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 248. Frey's remarks concerning the apocalyptic texts which speak of the pre-existence of the Messiah are worthy of note: “À y regarder de près, les textes peuvent s'expliquer d'une préexistence purement idéale, d'une sorte de prévoyance spéciale de Dieu par rapport au Messie; le fait est que le judaïsme rabbinique n'en a jamais admis d'autre. . . . Dans la plus favorable des hypothèses, la préexistence réelle du Messie ne serait contenue que dans les Paraboles d'Hénoch, et il ne s'ensuivrait pas encore que l'auteur ait reconnu au Messie une nature divine, car la notion de préexistence est fort compatible avec celle de création.” “Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .,” *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 141, 142.

The Parables comprise chapters 37 to 71 of the collection of Enoch. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 242; Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 208. Schürer refers to this section as “that section which, as regards its contents, is the most important of all.” *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, Vol. III, p. 60. Cf. also Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 242. As to the date of composition of the Parables Lagrange says, after giving the opinion of several other authors: “D'autres, comme Schürer et tout récemment M. Messel, se prononcent pour une époque plus basse, au plus tôt après l'an 40 av. J.-C., et même

If there was confusion in the minds of the Jews in regard to the origin of the Messias, their ideas about his function were very definite. The apocalypses are quite unanimous in their teaching about the work and function of the expected Messias. He was to bring about the glorification of the nation of Israel and the destruction of her Gentile enemies. The roles of conqueror and vanquished were to be reversed. The nations, after being defeated, would become subject to Israel. We read in the book of Jubilees: "And to Judah he (Isaac) said: "May the Lord give thee strength and power to tread down all that hate thee; a prince shalt thou be, thou and one of thy sons, over the sons of Jacob; may thy name and the name of thy sons go forth and traverse every land and region. Then shall the Gentiles fear before thy face, and all the nations shall quake (and all the peoples shall quake)" (xxx. 18).<sup>15</sup> Of the teaching of this apocalyptic work Charles says: "The author of Jubilees taught that there was no hope for the Gentiles: God had placed them under angelic guardians with the object of accomplishing their destruction (xv. 31). Moreover, the Jew who intermarried with them should be put to death, and the man who gave his daughter in marriage to a Gentile should be stoned with stones" (vii. 17).<sup>16</sup> In reference to the teaching of the Book of Jubilees about the final judgment Charles says: "From the standpoint of our author there could be no hope for the Gentiles."<sup>17</sup>

The Parables of Enoch have the same teaching in regard to the punishment to be inflicted upon the Gentile nations at the dawn of

après l'annexion romaine. C'est l'opinion que nous avons soutenue et qui nous paraît toujours de beaucoup la plus probable." *Op. cit.*, p. 255. Arendzen notes that the Book of Enoch "gained great popularity amongst Christ's contemporaries." *Op. cit.*, p. 26.

<sup>15</sup> Of the date of composition of Jubilees, Frey says: "Pour toutes ces raisons, nous plaçons la composition des Jubilés au début de la seconde moitié du deuxième siècle avant J.-C." "Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament," *DDLBSUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 375. Charles: "The Book of Jubilees was written in Hebrew by a Pharisee between the year of the accession of Hyrcanus to the high-priesthood in 135 and his breach with the Pharisees some years before his death in 105 B. C." *Op. cit.*, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 294.

<sup>17</sup> *Ibid.*

the Messianic era. "Then shall the kings and the mighty perish and be given into the hands of the righteous and holy" (xxxviii. 5). According to Psalm 17 of the collection known as the Psalms of Solomon, the Messiah would achieve a speedy victory over the enemies of Israel. This victory would be accomplished without the aid of armed forces. Not even the co-operation of the chosen people of Israel would be necessary. Nevertheless, the real king of Israel is God Himself. The Messiah is a human agent, whose success is due to the power of God. The Psalm reads, in part:

O Lord, Thou art our King for ever and ever. . . . And the kingdom of our God is for ever over the nations in judgement. Thou, O Lord, didst choose David (to be) king over Israel, and swarest to him touching his seed that never should his kingdom fail before Thee. . . . Behold, O Lord, and raise up unto them their king, the son of David, at the time in the which Thou seest, O God, that he may reign over Israel Thy servant. And gird him with strength, that he may shatter unrighteous rulers, and that he may purge Jerusalem from nations that trample (her) down to destruction. . . . He shall destroy the godless nations with the word of his mouth; at his rebuke nations shall flee before him, and he shall reprove sinners for the thoughts of their heart. . . . And he shall have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke. . . . For he shall not put his trust in horse and rider and bow, nor shall he multiply for himself gold and silver for war, nor shall he gather confidence from (?) a multitude (?) for the day of battle. The Lord Himself is his king, the hope of him that is mighty through (his) hope in God (1-38).<sup>18</sup>

The punishment of the Gentile nations, then, was part of the Messianic teaching of the apocalypses. The apocalypses taught

<sup>18</sup> Lagrange summarizes the teaching of the entire collection of psalms: "Le règne de Dieu, ce grand souci des psaumes, existe de droit sur la terre et sera réalisé en fait par le Messie." *Le Judaïsme* . . . , p. 162. Of the author of the 17th Psalm he says: "Son poème, de beaucoup le plus étudié de toute la collection, est un hymne au règne de Dieu, réalisé dans Israël et sur toute la terre par son représentant qui gouverne en son nom et dans l'intérêt de sa gloire." *Op. cit.*, p. 153. Of the date of composition of the collection Frey says: "Le Psautier de Salomon a donc été composé entre la fin du règne d'Alexandre Jannée (v. 80) et l'an 40 environ avant J.-C. C'est à quelques nuances près, la date communément acceptée par les critiques." "Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament," *DDL-B-SUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 375.

also that a great transformation would be wrought on plants, animals and men—on all the world and its inhabitants. In Messianic times the Jewish nation would enjoy untold peace, happiness and prosperity. "The Jewish apocalypses cannot find colors vivid enough to paint this idyllic happiness. Under their pen, the kingdom of the Messiah strongly resembles the Mohammedan paradise."<sup>19</sup> The Jewish nation was to enjoy a superabundance of good things at the hands of the Messiah. Peace and justice would reign throughout the world. There would be no more evil or sin. Thus, the book of Jubilees reads:

And in those days the children shall begin to study the laws, and to seek the commandments, and to return to the path of righteousness. And the days shall begin to grow many and increase amongst those children of men till their days draw nigh to one thousand years, and to a greater number of years than (before) was the number of the days. And there shall be no old man nor one who is (not) satisfied with his days, for all shall be (as) children and youths. And all their days they shall complete and live in peace and in joy, and there shall be no Satan nor any evil destroyer; for all their days shall be days of blessing and healing (xxiii. 26-29).

In the same vein, the first section of the book of Enoch (chapters 1 to 36) reads:

And then shall all the righteous escape, and shall live till they beget thousands of children, and all the days of their youth and their old age shall they complete in peace. And then shall the whole earth be tilled in righteousness, and shall all be planted with trees and be full of blessing. And all desirable trees shall be planted on it, and they shall plant vines on it: and the vine which they plant thereon shall yield wine in abundance, and as for all the seed which is sown thereon each measure (of it) shall bear a thousand, and each measure of olives shall yield ten presses of oil. . . . Then shall they (i. e., the elect) rejoice with joy and be glad, and into the holy place shall they enter; and its (i. e., the tree of life) fragrance shall be in their bones, and they shall live a long life on earth, such as thy fathers lived (x. 17-19; xxv. 6).<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> F. Prat, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 322.

<sup>20</sup> Concerning the first 36 chapters as comprising a distinct section of the collection of Enoch, cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 109; Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 168;

The sensuous concept of the kingdom found in this first section of Enoch, Charles maintains, was the popular concept of the kingdom at the time of our Lord. He says, referring directly to the question put to our Lord by the Sadducees (Matt. xxii. 24-28):

When the Sadducees said: "Whose wife shall she be of them; for the seven had her to wife," they are arguing from the sensuous conception of the Messianic kingdom—and this was no doubt the popular one—given in i Enoch i-xxxvi., according to which its members, including the risen righteous, were to enjoy every good thing of earth, and to have each a thousand children.<sup>21</sup>

The texts we have quoted thus far are sufficient to show what was the general teaching of the apocalypses concerning the expected Messianic era. Israel was to conquer the enemy Gentile nations. Israel would no longer be subject to the yoke of foreign dominance. The Gentiles would henceforth serve the Jewish nation. Moreover, the Jewish people would enjoy perfect peace and happiness. They would be blessed abundantly with all good things. And all these marvels would be accomplished through the agency of the Messiah, the Son of David, who would establish the kingdom of God. As Fouard says, referring particularly to the materialistic element in Jewish Messianic expectation at the time of Christ:

If we wish to understand the feelings and thoughts of these average Jews, we must look to the writings of that period. So, listen to this paragraph, found in the book of Enoch: "In those days there shall be a wondrous change for the elect. The light of day shall shine for them without shadow and without night; all majesty, all honor shall attend upon them. In those days the earth shall render up every treasure which she possesses. . . ." Their Sibylline Oracles have added to this description, so flattering to the senses, further promises of a felicity more terrestrial still. "The people of the Mighty God shall bathe in seas of gold

Frey, "Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament," *DDL-B-SUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 358. Of the date of composition of this section Lagrange says: "On la place généralement avant l'an 170. . . . Nous la croirions donc sûrement antérieure à l'an 125, peut-être antérieure à la persécution, mais peut-être datant des premiers jours de la révolte." *Op. cit.*, pp. 112, 113.

<sup>21</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 184.

and of silver, their garments shall be of purple; all lands and oceans shall pour their treasures at their feet, and the Saints shall reign amid unceasing delights. . . ." It would be easy to multiply quotations. The Fourth Book of Esdras, the Psalms of Solomon, the Jewish writers of Alexandria, bear witness everywhere to the same longings; everywhere we find these dreams of a people aspiring to a higher destiny, to a fuller fruition, yet longing for it only amid the things of earth and from temporal pleasures.<sup>22</sup>

Fouard, however, rightly adds: "All, indeed, as we have pointed out, did not partake of these material sentiments."

This last thought of Fouard calls for further consideration. At the same time there are several other features of Jewish Messianic expectation that we should mention in order to present a complete picture. We shall therefore consider the following propositions:

(1) At the time of Christ some Jews entertained true notions of the nature of the kingdom of God; (2) Even those Jews whose minds were focussed on more materialistic and nationalistic conceptions of the kingdom gave place therein to the triumph of the rights of God, the observance of His laws, and the promotion of His interests; and (3) At the time of Christ there existed a school of thought that can be described as eschatological Messianism.

(1) Some of Christ's contemporaries did not share the grosser Messianic ideas prevalent at the time. They realized that the expected kingdom of God would be primarily a spiritual kingdom. It will suffice for our purposes merely to indicate several passages found at the beginning of the Gospel narrative.

St. John the Baptist exhorted the people: "Repent for the kingdom of heaven is at hand" (Matt. iii. 2). This was an exhortation to the people to prepare spiritually for the advent of a spiritual kingdom. The rest of John's message likewise proclaims the spiritual nature of the kingdom. As Buzy-Barton say:

In all St. John's recorded discourses there is no hint of a restoration of the davidic kingdom, of the expulsion of foreigners, whether Edomites or Romans, and of victories over the Gentile

<sup>22</sup> *The Christ the Son of God*, Vol. I, pp. 13, 14. Cf. also Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933, p. 148.

nations. Far from encouraging national prejudices, St. John appears to combat them by his silence and by the new orientation he gives to popular conceptions. His own person and manner of life were also a sufficient proof that the true kingdom of the Messiah had nothing in common with that reign of material prosperity of which so many of his hearers dreamed.<sup>23</sup>

The Gospel clearly indicates that many of the people were receptive to this spiritual message of John. "Then there went out to him Jerusalem, and all Judea, and all the region about the Jordan; and they were baptized by him in the Jordan, confessing their sins" (Matt. iii. 5, 6). Such a ready acceptance of John's message shows that some of the people did not entertain, or at least did not obstinately cling to, Messianic hopes that were contrary to the true notion of the kingdom.

Previously, in the canticle of Zachary known as the "Benedictus," there is a forthright acknowledgment of the true spiritual and universal nature of the kingdom. Zachary says, in reference to his son, John, the Precursor of the Messiah:

And thou, child, shalt be called the prophet of the Most High, for thou shalt go before the face of the Lord to prepare his ways, to give to his people knowledge of salvation through forgiveness of their sins, because of the loving-kindness of our God, wherewith the Orient from on high has visited us, to shine on those who sit in darkness and in the shadow of death, to guide our feet into the way of peace (Luke i. 76-79).

Here it is proclaimed that the work of the Messiah is to be spiritual. He is to accomplish the forgiveness of sins. And the Gentiles, who sit in darkness and the shadow of death, are to participate in the salvation and peace which the Messiah will bring.

Again, at the time of the Presentation of the child Jesus in the Temple the aged Simeon took the infant in his arms and, praising God, said: "Now thou dost dismiss thy servant, O Lord, according to thy word, in peace; because my eyes have seen thy salvation, which thou hast prepared before the face of all peoples: a light of revelation to the Gentiles, and a glory for thy people Israel"

<sup>23</sup> *The Life of St. John the Baptist*, pp. 120, 121.

Luke ii. 29-32). Here the Messiah is represented not only as the glory of Israel but as the Savior of all the world.

Anticipating an objection against the use of these words of Zachary and Simeon as testimony that some of Christ's contemporaries held the correct notion of the kingdom of God, Felder says:

It is true it can with reason be objected . . . that Simeon and Zachary had attained to a higher conception of the Messiah by means of a special divine illumination. But it is none the less true that the divine illumination was bestowed upon them precisely because it found in them an instrument which had not been weakened by narrow political and worldly views of the Messiah. There were, therefore, certainly in Judaism at that time spiritual oases in which the Messianic ideas of the Prophets still lived.<sup>24</sup>

(2) Even those Jews who entertained more materialistic Messianic ideas included the triumph of the rights of God and the observance of His laws in their concept of the kingdom. As Felder says, after referring to the Messianism of the apocalypses as "a product of narrow Jewish patriotism": "It cannot, however, be denied that apocalyptic literature contains, nevertheless, also many golden grains obtained from the Prophets or from a tradition which had been nourished by the Prophets."<sup>25</sup> Texts that we have already quoted show that in the kingdom there was to be perfect conformity to the will of God. All His rights would be respected and all His interests promoted.<sup>26</sup> The following texts represent the same idea. The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs read, in the Testament of Levi: "In his priesthood shall sin come to an end, and the lawless shall cease to do evil" (xviii. 9).<sup>27</sup> The section

<sup>24</sup> H. Felder, *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, p. 169.

<sup>25</sup> *Op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 167, note 3.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. especially Parables xxxviii. 5; Psalms of Solomon xvii. 24, 25, 27; Jubilees xxiii. 26, 29.

<sup>27</sup> "The Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs were written in Hebrew in the latter years of John Hyrcanus—in all probability after his final victory over the Syrian power and before his breach with the Pharisees—in other words, between 109 and 106." Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 282. Frey: "À l'exception des nombreuses interpolations chrétiennes, l'apocalypse tout entier a donc pu voir le jour dans la seconde moitié du deuxième siècle avant Jésus-Christ." "Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament," *DDL-B-SUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 388.

of the collection of Enoch known as the Apocalypse of Weeks reads: "And after that there shall be another, the eighth week, that of righteousness, and a sword shall be given to it that a righteous judgement may be executed on the oppressors, and sinners shall be delivered into the hands of the righteous" (xc. 12).<sup>28</sup>

What is to be our judgment of such texts in the apocalypses—texts which speak of the triumph of the rights of God in the Messianic kingdom, the perfect observance of His laws, and the abolition of sin? It can only be said that the significance of these texts is colored by the context in which they are usually found—a context which emphasizes the vengeful triumph of Israel over the Gentile nations, the spread of Israel's power and glory throughout the world, and the material prosperity of the Jewish people. As Frey says: "But at the side of these lofty ideas, one sees national pride vaunting itself, the most arrogant conceit, pretension to a sanctity which is denied the Gentile nations, a feeling of fierce vengeance at sight of the punishments inflicted upon their enemies."<sup>29</sup> In other words, any truly spiritual outlook is precluded by excessive preoccupation with national ambition and with vengeful thoughts of the punishment to be inflicted on the detested Gentiles. Fonck expresses the same judgment in these words:

But the spiritual nature of the kingdom and of its riches are also repeatedly insisted on, not only in numerous passages of the Old Testament, but also in the apocryphal writings already men-

<sup>28</sup> The Apocalypse of Weeks comprises chapter 91, verses 12-17, and chapter 93. Cf. Charles, *op. cit.*, p. 262; Frey, "Apocryphes de l'Ancien Testament," *DDL-B-SUPPL.*, Vol. I, col. 365. Of the date of composition Frey says: "Avec le P. Lagrange nous pensons que 'cette petite apocalypse . . . pourrait dater des premiers temps machabéens.'" *Art. cit.*, col. 365. Charles believes that ". . . the date is wholly doubtful." *Op. cit.*, p. 171.

<sup>29</sup> "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 148. Frey says again: "Ce sont là les conditions les plus favorables qu'on fasse aux Gentils. Servir le Dieu des Juifs et recueillir les miettes qui tombent de la table du festin messianique, voilà ce qu'on leur accorde dans la meilleure des hypothèses; ils deviennent d'humbles prosélytes, on leur permet de faire des pèlerinages en Palestine et d'envoyer des offrandes au Temple; ce sont des citoyens de seconde zone. Le plus souvent, on les montre asservis aux Juifs. Et même ce sort peu enviable ne sera pas celui de tous les Gentils: . . ." *Ibid.*, p. 147. Cf. also Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, pp. 89, 90.

tioned. The kingdom itself is called "the assembly of the just" (Enoch xxxviii. 1) and penance is described as a condition of entering it. . . . But these characteristics, and above all the spirituality of the coming kingdom, became more and more transformed according to the carnal ideas of a people who were sunk in earthly things. . . . Further, all people should indeed belong to this kingdom, but, according to the Jewish idea, they should first become Israelites in all things and should take upon themselves the whole burden of the Law. And in the observance of this Law, supreme importance was more and more attached to the letter and to the external, ceremonial directions then prevailing.

The spiritual nature of the kingdom having thus lost its special significance, the Jewish writings in their descriptions of the sovereignty of the Messiah show how much the hopes and expectations of the people were founded on carnal and earthly things. The execution of vengeance on all enemies and oppressors and political freedom through the foundation of a great earthly kingdom were to signalize the beginning of this sovereignty.<sup>80</sup>

Charles likewise testifies to the general teaching of the apocalypses concerning the punishment and reprobation of the Gentiles. However, he would make some reservations for the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and, to a lesser extent, for the Psalms of Solomon. He says, in direct reference to the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs:

The kingdom is already established, and all the Gentiles will be saved through Israel. In the Judgement the conduct of the best heathen will form the norm according to which Israel shall be judged. . . . The first century B.C. additions are likewise characterized by the same Universalism. The Law was given to lighten every man, and the Gentiles were to be saved through the example and teaching of Israel (Test. Lev. xiv. 4). The same view of the destiny of the Gentiles is found in the Psalms of Solomon (xvii. 32), although it is perhaps not as favorable as that in these additions. In other literature of the first century B.C. a harsher fate is predicted for the Gentiles, as in 1 Enoch xxxvii.-lxxi. and the Assumption of Moses, and in 4 Ezra of the next century.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, pp. 60, 61.

<sup>81</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 294. Even the reservations Charles makes here for the Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs and for the Psalms of Solomon are not to

(3) There is a final feature of the Messianism of the apocalypses that remains to be considered. It is a type of eschatological Messianism. This teaching of the apocalypses is found especially in the Assumption of Moses and in the Parables of Enoch. It is well expressed in the following passage of the Assumption of Moses:

Then the hands of the angel shall be filled who has been appointed chief, and he shall forthwith avenge them of their enemies. . . . Then thou, O Israel, shalt be happy, and thou shalt mount upon the necks and wings of the eagle, and they shall be ended. And God will exalt thee, and He will cause thee to approach to the heaven of the stars, in the place of their habitation. And thou shalt look from on high and shalt see thy enemies in the Ge(henna), and thou shalt recognize them and rejoice, and thou shalt give thanks and confess thy Creator (x. 2, 8, 9, 10).

And in the Parables of Enoch we read: "And in that place mine eyes saw the Elect One of righteousness and of faith, and I saw his dwelling-place under the wings of the Lord of Spirits. And righteousness shall prevail in his days, and the righteous and elect shall be without number before Him for ever and ever" (xxxix. 6, 7).

These texts are sufficient to indicate the eschatological Messianism of the works in which they are found. The happiness of Israel has been transferred to the world beyond.<sup>32</sup> And, strangely, the Messias

be exaggerated. The very verse to which Charles refers from the Psalms of Solomon he himself renders: "And he (i. e., the Messias) shall have the heathen nations to serve him under his yoke . . ."; and among the functions of the Messias of the Testaments Charles includes in his resume: ". . . to war against Israel's national enemies. . . ." *Op. cit.*, p. 294. Frey, after referring to Psalm 17 as "l'écrit qui reflète le mieux l'idéal caressé par les Pharisiens et par les Juifs dans leur ensemble," says of the Messias of this Psalm: "Aussi le Messie sera-t-il un *libérateur*: descendant de David, il rétablira la dynastie nationale, chassera les étrangers, punira les Gentils de leur arrogance, détruira les pécheurs, réunira tous les Juifs dispersés, purifiera Jérusalem des souillures contractées au contact avec les Gentils et fera resplendir l'antique gloire d'Israël. Les nations ennemies seront en partie anéanties, les autres seront assujetties. Le jugement s'exerce ainsi par le combat; la victoire des pieux sur les païens et sur les Juifs infidèles assurera aux uns et aux autres la retribution méritée. Le Messie est un roi guerrier." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 142, 143. Cf. also Felder, *op. cit.*, p. 161.

<sup>32</sup> Lagrange terms the authors of the eschatological apocalypses "extrémistes

has now become primarily a judge. As the Parables of Enoch read: "And in those days shall the earth also give back that which has been entrusted to it, and Sheol also shall give back that which it has received, and hell shall give back that which it owes. For in those days the Elect One shall arise, and he shall choose the righteous and holy from among them: . . ." (li. 1, 5a, 2). In a previous chapter of the Parables of Enoch, the endowments of the Elect One are described as follows: "And in him dwells the spirit of wisdom, and the spirit which gives insight, and the spirit of understanding and of might, and the spirit of those who have fallen asleep in righteousness. And he shall judge the secret things, and none shall be able to utter a lying word before him; . . ." (xlix. 3, 4). Such are the endowments and work of the "Messias." Frey therefore says, in reference to the Parables: "The Messias of this book is therefore only a judge, and the judgment in question is that of definitive eschatology, where justice will be rendered to each one according to his works."<sup>33</sup>

The question naturally arises whether this judge was meant by the authors of these apocalypses to be the traditional and expected Messias. Lagrange thinks not: "Nothing indicates that the ancient authors of the apocalypses understood that the Judge of the last days would be the same as the expected Messias, the son of David, the terrestrial king of Israel. Rather, having despaired of their

quiétistes." *Op. cit.*, p. 237. His explanation of the origin of this eschatological Messianism is as follows: "Après tant de succès éphémères, devant la marche menaçante et irresistible des puissances du mal sur la terre, où elles exerçaient leur pouvoir, ils désespérèrent du monde lui-même, de ce monde d'en bas." *Ibid.* Cf. also p. 257. Felder: ". . . when the prospects of the realization of the Messianic-Davidic kingdom, after the downfall of the Machabees and the beginning of the time of Herod, vanished more and more, many zealots doubted whether they should live to see it in this thoroughly corrupted world. . . . In contrast to the hope of the future, previously held, which had kept wholly within the limits of the present world, all the Messianic ideas were now transported into the supermundane and the hereafter." *Op. cit.*, p. 164.

Lagrange believes that this eschatological Messianism is to be attributed to the Essenes. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 385. Felder does not attempt to identify this group of eschatological writers; but he points out that this form of Messianism was not the popular opinion. Cf. *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 165.

<sup>33</sup> "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 142.

time, they replaced the Messianic ideal with the ideal of him, whom, for the want of a better term, we call the great Assistant.<sup>34</sup> Charles likewise says, in reference to the Assumption of Moses, that the traditional Messiah is not found here: "There is no Messiah. This is probably due to the fact that the conception of the Messiah, as a man of war, was gaining more and more acceptance amongst the Pharisees, and was thus of a nature to promote the growing secularization of Pharisaism. No such Messiah could be acknowledged by our author."<sup>35</sup>

Even in this eschatological Messianism excessive nationalism, exclusivism, and preoccupation with vengeful thoughts of the punishment to be meted out to the Gentiles remain predominant notes. Thus Schürer summarizes the tenth chapter of the Assumption of Moses:

And then will His kingdom appear throughout His whole creation. Then will the devil have an end, and sorrow will disappear along with him. For the Heavenly One will rise up from

<sup>34</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 258. Cf. also Felder, *op. cit.*, p. 165. It is very difficult to determine the exact nature of this Messiah of eschatological Messianism, whom Lagrange calls "le grand Assistant." Lagrange considers this question; and he says, in reference to the Elect One of the Parables of Enoch: "Il est placé au-dessus des premiers anges, mais non pas dans la sphere divin. . . , Figure énigmatique, dont nous ne pouvons expliquer l'origine mais qui ressemble beaucoup à l'ange celeste de l'Assomption de Moïse qui vient pour enlever Israël." *Op. cit.*, p. 246.

<sup>35</sup> *Pseudepigrapha*, p. 412. Charles and Schürer are quite opposed in their opinions about the authorship and purpose of the Assumption of Moses. Both of their opinions differ from that of Lagrange, which we have already indicated, although Charles' opinion is not so much opposed as that of Schürer. Charles says: "The book was written by a Pharisaic Quietist and was designed by its author as a protest against the growing secularization of the Pharisaic party through its fusion with political ideals and popular Messianic beliefs. . . . And yet he was full of patriotism, for he looked for the return of the Ten Tribes, the establishment of the theocratic kingdom, the triumph of Israel over its foes. But though a patriot he was not a Zealot." *Op. cit.*, p. 407. Schürer says: "A literary memorial of the views and hopes of the Zealots is the *Assumptio Mosis*, which had its origin about that time, which goes so far in the way of prophecy as to say that Israel will tread on 'the neck of the eagle,' i. e., of the Romans (x. 8)." *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. III, p. 81.

His throne. And the earth will tremble, the sun will withhold its light, and the horns of the moon will be broken. For God the Most High will appear and He will punish the Gentiles. Then wilt thou be happy, O Israel, and God will exalt thee.<sup>36</sup>

And, speaking directly of the Parables of Enoch, Lagrange says:

It can be said that they complete the Assumption, dwelling on the person of the Savior and on the destinies which follow the judgment. The point of departure of salvation is the same, the moment when everything is despaired of, when there is no more hope—at least within a certain circle—for the temporal salvation of Israel, for its prosperity under a king Messiah, but only for the revenge of the holy ones upon their oppressors through the dazzling intervention of God revealing the Elect One, the king of the future world, where Israel naturally occupies the first place.<sup>37</sup>

We have now considered the various features of Jewish Messianic expectation as found in the apocalypses. To draw a general conclusion in regard to the Messiah of the apocalypses, we can say with Lagrange: "When the Messiah appears, the Messiah of whom the ancient prophets and the psalms spoke, he is engaged in the temporal and national prosperity of Israel. If the scene is transferred to the world beyond, we see appear a Son or Man or rather an Elect as judge, but who has done nothing for the salvation of men."<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup> *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. III, p. 77.

<sup>37</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 255. The section of the book of Enoch known as The Book of the Wisdom of Enoch—comprising chapters 91 to 105—also belongs to the group of eschatological apocalypses. Cf. Lagrange, *op. cit.*, pp. 263-266. However, it "n'a pas remplacé le Messie, roi, fils de David, par un être celeste, chef du monde futur." Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 266.

<sup>38</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 83. Lagrange notes here: "Nous montrerons plus loin que le Fils de l'homme des Paraboles d'Hénoch est une interpolation chrétienne." *Op. cit.*, p. 83, note 3.

Felder does not think that apocalyptic thought was widely spread. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 163. However, comparing the Messianism of the apocalypses with the rabbinical Messianic ideas, which he says were those "of the great mass of the Jewish people" at the time of Christ, Felder says: "The eschatological element is also the only difference between the *rabbinical and the apocalyptic Messianic standpoints*. . . . Like the rabbinical ideas of the Messiah, those of

If now we turn to the profane historical records of the time of Christ, we shall find additional evidence that the Jews were expecting the coming of the kingdom of God, and that excessive nationalism and an intense longing for political independence and for the glory and aggrandizement of Israel characterized these Messianic expectations.

Consider, first, a summary statement of Tacitus:

In most there was firm persuasion, that in the ancient records of their past, was contained a prediction of how at this very time the East was to grow powerful, and rulers, coming from Judea, were to acquire universal empire. These mysterious prophecies had pointed to Vespasian and Titus, but the common people, with the usual blindness of ambition, had interpreted these destinies of themselves, and could not be brought even by disasters to believe the truth.<sup>39</sup>

Tacitus is here referring to the time of the siege of Jerusalem. That great calamity for the Jewish nation was the outcome of the revolt of the Jews against the Roman procurator, Gessius Florus (64-66). The revolt, however, was only the final term in a long series of lesser insurrections and other manifestations of dissatisfaction with Roman rule. Characteristic of this insurrectionist movement was its Messianic feature.<sup>40</sup> For our purposes it will be sufficient

the apocalyptists are also a product of narrow Jewish patriotism. In both cases the kingdom of the Messiah and the kingdom of God are looked upon as essentially a national, sensuously glorious world-power, at the head of which Jehovah and his representative, the Messiah, are to reign." *Op. cit.*, pp. 165, 167. On this same question of the distinction between rabbinical Messianism and apocalyptic Messianism, Frey says: "Il y aurait beaucoup à dire sur cette division qui, à bien des égards, est arbitraire, car il n'existait pas de cloisons étanches entre les différentes conceptions: une vaste gamme d'idées similaires les rattachait les unes aux autres." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 139.

<sup>39</sup> *History*, v. 13.

<sup>40</sup> Frey, ". . . les faux Messies eux-mêmes, nombreux au premier siècle, au témoignage de l'histoire, et qui entraînaient parfois des foules considérables à leur suite, attestent à leur manière la profondeur du sentiment dans les masses populaires." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 138, 139.

to mention briefly some of the stages in this development, beginning with the death of Herod the Great.

Herod the Great died in 4 B. C. After his death there was an outbreak of insurrections throughout Palestine. Josephus tells us: "And now Judea was full of robberies; and, as the several companies of the seditious lighted upon any one to head them, he was created a king immediately, in order to do mischief to the public."<sup>41</sup> In Galilee Judas the son of Ezechias installed himself as king at Sepphora. Simon, an old slave of Herod, assumed the leadership in Perea. In Judea Athronges set himself up as king. Of course, these insurrections were put down by the Roman authorities, and the rebels were treated with great severity. At Jerusalem 2000 Jews were crucified by Varus.<sup>42</sup>

Of these insurrections after the death of Herod, Schürer says: "It was a time of general upheaval, when every one sought to secure the greatest possible benefit for himself. On the part of the people there was agreement only on this one point, that every one wished at any cost to be freed from the power of the Romans."<sup>43</sup> Lagrange describes the period and indicates the Messianic import of the insurrections: "A king was needed; a king who would save the country from the yoke of the sons of Herod and from the yoke of Rome. Who would it be? No one knew, but whoever pretended to be the king had his chances, so great was the conviction that the moment had come when a king, unknown till now, would be the savior."<sup>44</sup>

Archelaus, the son of Herod the Great, was deposed in 6 A.D. Shortly after his death a census was held in Judea. This was the occasion for another outbreak among the people. The revolt this time was led by Judas the Galilean.<sup>45</sup> Josephus indicates that

<sup>41</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, 17:10:8.

<sup>42</sup> For the full account of the various insurrections, cf. Josephus, *op. cit.*, 17:10:5-9.

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, Div. I, Vol. II, p. 4.

<sup>44</sup> *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 206.

<sup>45</sup> Schürer maintains that Judas the Galilean and the Judas who led the revolt in Galilee after the death of Herod the Great were "certainly identical." *Op. cit.*, Div. I, Vol. II, p. 80. Lagrange believes they were different persons. Cf. *Le Judaïsme* . . . , p. 213.

Judas had a large following. Referring directly to Eleazar, a descendant of Judas the Galilean, Josephus says: "He was a descendant of the Judas, who, as we have previously stated, induced multitudes of Jews to refuse to enroll themselves, when Quirinius was sent as censor to Judea."<sup>46</sup> Josephus also indicates the Messianic character of this revolt at the time of the census. Judas, he says, "incited his countrymen to revolt, upbraiding them as cowards for consenting to pay tribute to the Romans and tolerating mortal masters, after having God for their Lord."<sup>47</sup>

The revolt of Judas was put down by the Roman authorities. But the movement did not die. Rather did it become progressively stronger. Josephus says of the revolt: ". . . whence arose seditions, and from them murders of men, which sometimes fell on those of their own people (by the madness of these men towards one another, while their desire was that none of the adverse party might be left), and sometimes on their enemies; . . ."<sup>48</sup> Later on, the followers of Judas were to be called Zealots because of their zeal for the cause of God and the welfare of their country.<sup>49</sup> They also were known as "sicarii"—in obvious reference to the method they employed in bringing about the elimination of their adversaries. It is very important to note that Josephus ascribes to the growth of this movement, begun by Judas the Galilean, the ultimate cause of the country's disaster. In reference to Judas and Saddoq, a Pharisee who joined Judas, he says: ". . . for Judas and Saddouk, who excited a fourth philosophic sect among us, and had a great many followers therein, filled our civil government with tumults at present, and laid the foundation of our future miseries . . . , and this the rather because the infection which spread thence among the younger sort, who were zealous for it, brought the public to destruction."<sup>50</sup>

Schürer indicates very clearly the Messianic character of the

<sup>46</sup> *The Jewish War*, 7:8:1.

<sup>47</sup> *Ibid.*, 2:8:1.

<sup>48</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, 18:1:1.

<sup>49</sup> Cf., e.g., *The Jewish War*, 4:3:9ff.; 4:5:1; 4:6:3; 7:8:1.

<sup>50</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, 18:1:1.

revolt under Judas the Galilean and points out the ultimate consequences of the movement. He says:

Judas of Gamala in Gaulanitis, called the Galilean . . . in company with a Pharisee of the name of Sadduc, made it his task to rouse the people into opposition, and in the name of religion to preach rebellion and revolutionary war. This movement had not, indeed, any immediate marked success. But the revolutionists got so far as to found now among the Pharisees a more strict fanatical party, that of the patriotic resolute, or, as they called themselves, the Zealots, who wished not to remain in quiet submission till by God's decree the Messianic hope of Israel should be fulfilled, but would rather employ the sword in hastening its realization, and would rush into conflict with the godless enemy. It is to their machinations that we are to ascribe the nursing of the fires of revolution among the smouldering ashes which sixty years later burst forth in vehement flames.<sup>51</sup>

It is to be observed that this revolutionary movement was supported at first only by a group of extremists. No doubt the aims of these extremists represented the hopes of all the Jews, but many of the people did not think it opportune to resort to such violent measures. Furthermore, they had good reason to realize that the Roman rule was not altogether without benefit. As Arendzen says, in presenting what seems to be a rather accurate picture of the attitude of the Jewish people toward Rome at the time of Christ:

<sup>51</sup> *Op. cit.*, Div. I, Vol. II, p. 80. In reference to the period just before the fatal revolt under Florus Gessius (64-66), Schürer says: "With these political fanatics (i. e., the sicarii) there were associated religious fanatics. . . . Advancing the claim of a divine mission, they roused the people to a wild enthusiasm, and led the credulous multitude in crowds out into the wilderness, in order that they might show them 'the tokens foreshadowing freedom' . . . that freedom which consisted in casting off the Roman yoke and setting up the kingdom of God, or, to use the language of Josephus, in innovation and revolution." *Op. cit.*, Div. I, Vol. I, p. 179. Lagrange has high praise for Josephus for his appreciation of the significance of the movement started by Judas the Galilean. He says: "Il en jugeait d'après le résultat qu'il avait eu sous les yeux, et peut-être n'a-t-il jamais été plus clair-voyant que lorsqu'il a vu dans l'entraînement croissant du peuple vers ces opinions extrêmes la cause de la catastrophe finale." *Op. cit.*, p. 214.

Though the desire of throwing off the yoke of Rome was no doubt felt in many Jewish breasts in New Testament days, we must never forget that at least while our Lord was on earth, this longing had not yet grown to a great national passion. The Jews had experienced in Herod the Great the rule of a native, almost independent, prince, Jewish in religion, but not fully Jewish in blood. The last years of his reign had become an unbearable tyranny. His son, Archelaus, had followed in his father's footsteps and caused frightful bloodshed. The Jews themselves had . . . gone to Rome to beg for a Roman governor rather than this half-Jewish king, and the Roman governors had on the whole been beneficent and tolerant governors. . . . Fierce hate of Rome was fanned into a flame a generation later partially by the incompetence and ruthlessness of Roman governors, partially by the restlessness of the people who had the strong conviction that the Messianic times had arrived.<sup>52</sup>

These references we have made to profane historical records of the time of Christ confirm the conclusions we had previously drawn from our study of the apocalypses. In general, it is true to say that excessive nationalism and exclusivism, a longing for vengeful retribution against the enemies of the nation, and pronounced materialism characterized the Messianic ideas of the Jews at the time of our Lord. "Almost all the contemporaries of Christ were waiting for a national king, a descendant of David, who would deliver Israel, destroy her oppressors and inaugurate at Jerusalem an era of justice, of peace, and of unmixed happiness."<sup>53</sup>

Now, Christ had come into the world precisely to preach and to establish the kingdom of God. How did His notion of the kingdom and of the work of the Messiah compare with that of His Jewish contemporaries? The Gospels supply the answer. Christ's Messianic ideas were in complete opposition with those of the Jews.<sup>54</sup> It was a contrast, essentially, of the spiritual and the material. The Jewish Messiah was to be an earthly, temporal king, who would exercise his reign over lands and peoples. Christ came as a heavenly, spiritual king, whose reign was to be exercised over the souls of men.

<sup>52</sup> "The Jewish Background to the New Testament," *New Testament*, p. 28.

<sup>53</sup> Prat, *Jésus Christ*, I, 321.

<sup>54</sup> In chapter 4 we shall consider more in detail the Gospel evidence for this contrast in Messianic ideas.

The Jewish Messiah was to free the Jews from the yoke of foreign dominance and oppression. Christ came to liberate the souls of men from the bondage of sin. The Jewish Messiah was to bring material prosperity to the Jews, to satisfy their earthly and materialistic desires. Christ came to bring spiritual gifts, gifts of grace for the souls of men. The Jewish Messiah was to be a glorious conqueror, to make his appearance in splendor, and to multiply victories and conquer easily. Christ came to achieve spiritual victories; He was born amid the most humble and miserable surroundings; He was to live a life of poverty; His victories would be achieved through His sufferings and death.<sup>55</sup> The Jewish Messiah was to establish his kingdom through the power of God; the efforts and co-operation even of the chosen people of Israel would not be necessary for his triumph; the kingdom of God would impose itself, even upon the people of Israel, by its very splendor and grandeur.

<sup>55</sup> Edersheim, referring to "ancient Rabbinic writings," says: "... there is only the most indistinct reference to the removal of sin by the Messiah in the sense of vicarious suffering." *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, 165. At the conclusion of his study of the "Messianic hope" of the Jews (pp. 126-187) Schürer says: "In not one of the numerous works discussed by us have we found even the slightest allusion to an atoning suffering of the Messiah." *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 186. Cf. also Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme* . . . , p. 385; Frey, "Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 145, 146; Barton, "The Religion of Post-Exilic Judaism," *SCR*, Vol. 3, No. 30, p. 27; Arendzen, "The Jewish Background to the New Testament," *New Testament*, p. 28.

Referring to the interpretation of the Suffering Messiah passage in Isaias (lii. 13; liii. 12), Schürer says: "The, so to speak, official Targum Jonathan allows indeed the reference of Isaias liii. to the Messiah to remain on the whole, but denies the application to him of just those verses, which treat of the sufferings of the servant of God." *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 186. Lagrange: "Ce qui prouve à quel degré les souffrances du Messie étaient antipathiques au judaïsme, c'est le Targum de Pseudo-Jonathan sur Isaïe (lii. 13, liii. 12). Le début et la fin sont tellement glorieux pour le Serviteur que le Targum reconnaît en lui le Messie. . . . Le chapitre lii se terminant dans la gloire du Serviteur, il est donc d'abord le Messie; mais aussitôt qu'il est endolori au point de perdre l'aspect d'un homme, cela est mis sur le compte d'Israël pendant la période douloureuse de l'attente; puis brusquement c'est le Messie qui reparait pour recevoir les hommages des rois. Trois interprétations en trois versets." *Le Judaïsme* . . . , p. 386. Cf. also Frey, "Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 146; Felder, *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, p. 163.

Christ was not to establish His kingdom in the souls of men without their own effort and co-operation; the individual would have to desire and freely accept the reign of God in his soul. The Jewish Messiah was to achieve an immediate, sudden, and decisive victory over the enemies of the nation. Christ's great triumph on Calvary would come only after a life of hardship and after the sufferings of His passion. Even then, the struggle for the souls of men would continue till the end of time. The forces of evil would remain, and would remain active, throughout the earthly phase of the kingdom. Temptation, sin, and the efforts of Satan to prevent the establishment of the kingdom in the souls of men would not cease immediately. The individual would have to struggle and overcome obstacles directed against his salvation. Effort and perseverance would be necessary for the final attainment of membership in the kingdom of God.

In broad outlines, this is the contrast that existed between the Messianic ideas of the Jews and those of Christ. Edersheim, therefore, presents the true picture when he says:

The Rabbinical ideal of the Messiah was not that of "a light to lighten the Gentiles, and the glory of His people Israel"—the satisfaction of the wants of humanity, and the completion of Israel's mission—but quite different, even to contrariety. Accordingly, there was a fundamental antagonism between the Rabbis and Christ, quite irrespective of the manner in which He carried out His Messianic work. On the other hand, it is equally noteworthy, that the purely national elements, which well nigh formed the sum total of Rabbinic expectation, scarcely entered into the teaching of Jesus about the kingdom of God. And the more we realize, that Jesus so fundamentally separated Himself from all the ideas of His time, the more evidential is it of the fact, that He was not the Messiah of Jewish conception, but derived His mission from a source unknown to, or at least ignored by, the leaders of His people.<sup>56</sup>

<sup>56</sup> *Op. cit.*, I, 164. In the same context Edersheim remarks further on the "absence of any deeper spiritual elements" in the Messianic expectations of "the ancient Synagogues." Cf. also Rose, *Studies on the Gospels*, pp. 102, 103; Durand, "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 761.

### CHAPTER III

#### THE KINGDOM PARABLES AN ELEMENT IN A GRADUAL REVELATION

THUS far it has been shown that the Messianic expectations of the Jews were in direct opposition to the true kingdom of God that Christ came into the world to establish. Essentially, the contrast was one of the material and the spiritual. Now, Christ certainly wanted His preaching to be accepted and His mission of salvation to be effective. He came to be the Savior of all men. He certainly wanted the Jews to abandon their false Messianic ideas and accept His true teaching. What must He do, therefore, as the wise and merciful Saviour, to eradicate the erroneous ideas of the people and supplant them with the true concept of the kingdom? It was obvious that He could not immediately proclaim Himself to be the Messiah. He could not teach openly and clearly and from the very beginning that the kingdom of God was essentially a spiritual kingdom, that it was primarily the acceptance of the will of God, the eradication of sin, and the development of the spiritual life of grace in the soul. Such a procedure would have foredoomed His efforts to failure. The contrast in Messianic ideas was too great to expect that the people would abandon their erroneous notions and accept the true concept of the kingdom. "So different were messianic King and His kingdom from what the Jews had looked for, that if this had come clearly before their eyes they could not have supported this revelation, which would have been a cause of scandal to their souls."<sup>1</sup>

Christ, therefore, chose a wiser method. He chose to present the true teaching about the Messiah and the kingdom of God in a gradual revelation. He would accommodate His teaching to the misconceptions and shortcomings of the people. Before presenting the full and clear truth about the nature of the kingdom, He would first prepare the minds and hearts of the people through a gradual

<sup>1</sup> Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, II, 443.

revelation. As Davis says: "Jesus in presenting His message takes into consideration the restlessness, worldliness, and nationalism of the Jews. It would cause nothing but scandal for a poor carpenter to declare at once that he was the Christ, the Son of God. The Jews must first be converted to a more spiritual outlook."<sup>2</sup>

One of the elements in this gradual revelation of Christ was the use of the parables. The popular parable method offered itself as an excellent means of accomplishing Christ's purposes. The parable was ideally suited to be an element in His gradual revelation. As Knox says, "They were expecting a kingdom, but it was the wrong kind of kingdom. And because they had a wrong idea of what to expect, our Lord proceeds to educate them very carefully and tactfully, by hints at first and by prophetic allegories, out of that wrong idea into the true idea of the Church he meant to institute."<sup>3</sup>

The parable was a story. It captivated the imagination. It assured the attention and interest of the listeners. The people would

<sup>2</sup> "The Gospels as a Source of Dogma," *New Testament*, p. 309. Lagrange, "On n'était pas d'accord sur le royaume de Dieu. Si on était d'accord, c'était surtout pour en faire une glorification nationale, ce qui était précisément contraire aux vues de Jésus. D'après les dispositions du peuple, il lui était interdit par la plus élémentaire prudence de s'exprimer sur ce point clairement, et c'est pourquoi il se contentait de faire naître chez ses auditeurs des dispositions favorables: la pénitence, la prière, la confiance en Dieu, le désir d'entrer dans son royaume, quelle fût sa forme historique." *RB*, 1904 (XIII), p. 117. Cf. also Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 275.

<sup>3</sup> *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, p. 3. Cf. also Vosté, *Parabolae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 149. Lagrange: "Jésus a voulu éclairer le peuple, et n'a jamais parlé que pour être compris; mais il n'a pas voulu flatter ses passions ni non plus les heurter trop violemment. Entre son idéal et celui des Juifs il n'y avait pas de commune mesure. Il devait résigner à ne pas tout dire et à porter les âmes, par un enseignement très clair, vers un but mystérieux. La parabole avec ses nuances infinies était l'instrument le mieux approprié à sa tâche divine." *RB*, 1904 (XIII), p. 117. Frey: "Il était obligé d'user de précautions infinies et de ne révéler sa messianité que progressivement, car rien ne lui servait de se dire le Messie tant qu'il n'avait pas instruit les âmes sur la nature de son royaume messianique. Le recours aux paraboles relève aussi, en partie, de cette méthode pédagogique." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 291, 292.

look beyond the story to try to understand the lesson of Christ. They were accustomed to being taught in parables. Moreover, Christ would help them to comprehend the lesson. He would tell them the object of the parable—that He was speaking to them about the kingdom of God. That term was familiar to them. They were looking forward eagerly to the coming of the kingdom. Besides, Christ would be only too ready and eager to answer their questions about the lesson of the parable. Only good will was necessary—they would have to reflect a little on the story, to try to see the lesson behind the comparison. If only they made some effort, they would soon come to the realization that Christ's ideas about the kingdom of God were quite different from their own. Then they would have to decide whether their own ideas were to be retained or those of Christ accepted. They would have to examine the credentials of Christ, especially the evidence of His miracles. That was the reason why Christ performed miracles. "He used miracles in the first place to arouse, awaken and raise the soul; surprise and admiration being the first steps in this path. Then, if the soul is faithful and attentive, little by little she will discern the presence of a supernatural power, and then of a Man to whom she may and ought to engage her faith."<sup>4</sup> Once the people believed in the divine authority of Christ they would be ready—with the help of God's grace—to abandon their false Messianic ideas and accept His teaching about the kingdom.<sup>5</sup>

The parables, then, were an element in Christ's gradual revelation of the true nature of the kingdom of God. To realize how well

<sup>4</sup> Lebreton, *op. cit.*, II, pp. 440, 441.

<sup>5</sup> Concerning Christ's purpose in using the parables of the kingdom, Buzy says: "Son but était que tous les Juifs le reconnussent pour Messie, qu'ils devinssent membres du Royaume, et, comme tels, bénéficiaires de tous ses avantages spirituels. Les Paraboles étaient, dans sa pensée, un traité populaire du Royaume, auquel la profusion des comparaisons donnait même la physionomie d'un catéchisme en images. Bien comprises, elles eussent répandu dans la multitude des notions exactes sur ces réalités religieuses; elles eussent éliminé, corrigé, enrichi, surélevé les notions en cours, et préparé les esprits à reconnaître le vrai Messie dans l'humble fondateur de royaume qu'était Jésus. Et, avec la foi, tous les biens surnaturels auraient afflué." *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 379, 380.

suited the parables were for this purpose, it will be helpful for us now to study the kingdom parables individually. We shall confine our observations to the group of eight parables that Christ delivered at the lake-side.

*The Sower:* Behold, the sower went out to sow. And as he sowed, some seeds fell by the wayside, and the birds came and ate them up. And other seeds fell upon rocky ground, where they had not much earth; and they sprang up at once, because they had no depth of earth; but when the sun rose they were scorched, and because they had no root they withered away. And other seeds fell among thorns; and the thorns grew up and choked them. And other seeds fell upon good ground, and yielded fruit, some a hundredfold, some sixtyfold, and some thirtyfold. He who has ears to hear, let him hear (Matt. xiii. 3-9).<sup>6</sup>

The Jewish people looked upon the establishment of the kingdom as a glorious manifestation of the power of God in behalf of Israel. The success and victory of the Messiah would be achieved without the co-operation and effort even of the chosen people. The kingdom would impose itself even upon the Jews by its very splendor. The Jews would become the happy members of this kingdom without undergoing any suffering or sacrifice.

It was in opposition to such ideas that Christ told the parable of the Sower. The establishment of the kingdom does not depend just on the work of the Messiah. Added to His efforts there must be the co-operation of the individual who wishes to become a member of the kingdom. The kingdom is not imposed by force, regardless of the desire and regardless of the willingness and effort of the individual person. There are forces opposed to the establishment of the kingdom—forces external to man and forces within man himself. Effort, perseverance, and even suffering are necessary if the individual wishes to achieve a place in the kingdom. The kingdom of God is primarily the reign of God in the soul. If the kingdom is to be established, the message of the Messiah must be

<sup>6</sup> Cf. also Mark iv. 1-9; Luke viii. 4-8. Christ explained this parable (Matt. xiii. 18-23; Mark iv. 13-20; Luke viii. 11-15) and also the parable of the Weeds, which we shall soon consider.

received with sincere, good intentions. And then the individual must obstinately withstand whatever would seek to destroy the kingdom within him or would attempt to impede its development. Effort, sacrifice, and perseverance are required for the establishment and development of the kingdom in the soul.

Fonck therefore says, speaking of the teaching of Christ in this parable of the Sower:

In the first place, He shows them by His choice of the image that His Kingdom will not be suddenly proclaimed in power and splendor. The Word of the Kingdom resembles rather the small and insignificant grain of wheat which is committed to the earth to develop therein slowly and gradually, and to yield rich harvest in the good ground. . . . Our Lord in this first parable gives chief importance to another lesson. He shows in the second place whence comes the opposition to the Word of the Kingdom and the partial unproductiveness of the good seed. . . . It (i. e., the parable of the Sower) revealed to the disciples the causes of the unbelief of so many and showed them the conditions which were attached to the development of the kingdom. For this, there is required from every one a heart willing and ready for sacrifice and disengaged from every earthly and sensual attachment.<sup>7</sup>

In explaining the lesson of the parable Knox emphasizes the universality of the kingdom of God as opposed to the exclusivism of the current Jewish concept of the kingdom:

But it is clear that the average Jew thought of the qualification for that kingdom as a mere matter of race; it was a case of "Founder's kin"; if you were Abraham's seed, you participated in whatever happiness that kingdom brought with it; if not, it was no fault of yours, but you had no part in it. Whatever indirect advantages the Gentiles might derive from it, the kingdom was for the Jews. . . . And this notion of a seed being sowed broadcast, and meeting with a different amount of response and bearing a different amount of fruit—what is it but an open challenge to current Jewish theology? <sup>8</sup>

<sup>7</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, pp. 87, 88, 93.

<sup>8</sup> *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, pp. 47, 48. Cf. also Vosté, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 198.

*The Mustard Seed:* The kingdom of heaven is like a grain of mustard seed, which a man took and sowed in his field. This indeed is the smallest of all the seeds; but when it grows up it is larger than any herb and becomes a tree, so that the birds of the air come and dwell in its branches (Matt. xiii. 31, 32).<sup>9</sup>

The Jews believed that the kingdom of God would be established suddenly and completely, with magnificent splendor and grandeur. The king Messias would achieve an immediate and decisive victory. "They counted . . . on a lightning intervention from the heavens, which would change the whole course of events and would bring about, as it were, by one mighty stroke, a marvelous state of affairs from which all evil would be excluded."<sup>10</sup> Christ corrects this false idea in the parable of the Mustard Seed. To be sure, the kingdom will eventually attain great extension because of the power of God within it; but its beginnings will be small and its development will be gradual.

Fonck explains the lesson of the parable in these words:

The grain of mustard-seed, to the minuteness and insignificance of which our divine Saviour so expressly draws attention, points out to us the small and insignificant beginnings of the kingdom of Heaven. In complete contrast to the earthly power and splendor of the Messianic kingdom expected by the Jews, our Saviour sets before us in this simple and beautiful image from nature, in bold outlines, the sublime fundamental law of His divine constitution. It is the same divine law which He as a feeble Babe on the miserable straw in the cold stable of Bethlehem had already proclaimed to the world as His royal programme, the law which later He always and everywhere obeyed and exhorted others to obey and which the Heavenly Father also constantly observed with regard to the kingdom of Heaven. . . . This fundamental law of every divine operation had to be carried into effect from the beginning in the kingdom of God in the Church. Small and insignificant, lowly and contemptible in the eyes of men, thus was it to begin its existence, that so, as God's work, it might grow and develop, and precisely in this glorious development from the most insignificant beginnings proclaim its character as a divine institution.<sup>11</sup>

<sup>9</sup> Cf. also Mark iv. 30-32; Luke xiii. 18, 19.

<sup>10</sup> Prat, *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 322.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 165, 166. Cf. also Prat, *op. cit.*, I, 322; Prado, *Novum Testamentum* (Praelectionum Biblicarum Compendium), p. 244.

*The Leaven:* The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman took and buried in three measures of flour, until all of it was leavened (Matt. xiii. 33).<sup>12</sup>

In this parable Christ teaches that the kingdom of God is primarily spiritual—working interiorly in the souls of men, reforming and transforming them. Leaven is a hidden force concealed in the dough; but it is a force that is very active and affects the whole mass. The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, Christ says. It penetrates the souls of men, enlightens their minds, reforms their morals, and even makes their souls divine. This was not the Jewish idea of the kingdom. “The conception of an interior, spiritual force, whether conceived as working within the soul or among men as a group, was lacking from the Jewish seers. Even the rabbis who could discourse endlessly on the transformation to be wrought in the kingdom of God upon plants, animals, and men, make no mention of that power of God which according to St. Paul is the whole Gospel.”<sup>13</sup> Knox therefore says, in reference to the lesson of the parable of the Leaven: “The Jew thinks of the kingdom as a theocracy imposed on the world by force of arms from without; our Lord teaches, in the parable of the Leaven, that it is, on the contrary, a hidden influence which by its own inherent energies is to transform the world from within.”<sup>14</sup>

*The Treasure and the Pearl:* The kingdom of heaven is like a treasure hidden in a field; a man who finds it hides it, and in his joy goes and sells all that he has and buys that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant in search of fine pearls. When he finds a single pearl of great price, he goes and sells all that he has and buys it (Matt. xiii. 44-46).

In these two parables Christ repeats an element in His teaching on the kingdom already set forth in the parable of the Sower. The

<sup>12</sup> Cf. Luke xiii. 20, 21.

<sup>13</sup> Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 189.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Cf. also Callan, *The Parables of Christ*, p. 42. Prat compares the lessons of the parables of the Mustard Seed and of the Leaven: “La parabole du Sénévé nous montre son extension graduelle et ses progrès

Jews thought that membership in the kingdom did not depend on the individual's efforts. They expected to see the kingdom appear suddenly, transforming the world and all its inhabitants, imposing itself on them by its very splendor and power. In these two parables Christ opposes such a false notion of the kingdom. The kingdom of God does not impose itself by force. Men must desire it. Men must strive for it. They must undergo sacrifice in order to attain it. There is a second lesson in the two parables. The kingdom of God exceeds in value all other goods and possessions. Its attainment, therefore, is worth great effort and sacrifice. We should be ready and willing to give up everything else that we have and that we hold dear, in order to attain the kingdom.

Lagrange emphasizes both these lessons in his interpretation of the two parables. He says:

After giving the main features of the kingdom of God, Jesus urges His hearers to possess themselves of it, even at the sacrifice of everything they have. Was it then within their reach? Did it depend on them whether they obtained it? Such was not the idea of those who expected to see it appear suddenly in majesty, transforming the world and its inhabitants, imposing itself on them by the splendor of the Lord God. But He had given them to understand that this kingdom was a doctrine—doubtless the very doctrine He had preached in the Sermon on the Mount—and that this doctrine's destiny hung upon the dispositions with which it was received. It was time, therefore, to call upon them by the use of homely comparisons to set to work in order to gain the benefit of the kingdom, in the way that they would not hesitate to act if they wished merely to gain money. This is the significance of the very clear and urgent parables of the treasure and the pearl.<sup>15</sup>

inattendus; la parabole du Levain nous fait voir le travail intérieur de la grâce dans les âmes régénérées." *Op. cit.*, I, 333. Cf. also Fonck, *op. cit.*, p. 176.

<sup>15</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 190. Fonck points out the practical identity in the lessons of these two parables. He says, in his commentary on the parable of the Pearl, "The meaning of the present parable is identical in all the main points with that of the previous one, the Hidden Treasure. The differences between the two are only accidental and turn merely on the choice of the image. . . . In both parables, Christ would direct the disciples' attention to two points in particular: the great value of the kingdom of Heaven

*The Weeds:* The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field; but while men were asleep, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. And when the blade sprang up and brought forth fruit, then the weeds appeared as well. And the servants of the house-holder came and said to him, "Sir, didst thou not sow good seed in thy field? How then does it have weeds?" He said to them, "An enemy has done this." And the servants said to him, "Wilt thou have us go and gather them up?" "No," he said, "lest in gathering the weeds you root up the wheat along with them. Let both grow together until the harvest; and at harvest time I will say to the reapers, 'Gather up first the weeds, and bind them in bundles to burn; but the wheat gather into my barn'" (Matt. xiii. 24-30).

The Jews, we repeat, thought that the Messiah would achieve an immediate and complete victory over the enemies of the kingdom. After this victory there would be perfect peace and happiness for Israel. There would be no more evil, no more misfortune, no more injustice or sin of any kind. That this is the wrong notion of the Messianic kingdom is the lesson of the parable of the Weeds. The enemies of the kingdom will not be destroyed immediately. They will continue to be active and even to thrive. They will continue to oppose the spread of the kingdom of God in the souls of men. This opposition of the forces of evil will last for a time—for the duration of the earthly phase of the kingdom. Then the enemies of the kingdom will be rendered powerless. As Rose says, speaking in reference to both this parable and the parable of the Seed that grows of itself:

The Jews expected the revelation of God to be brilliant and blinding—like a meteor. The kingdom is founded in a hidden and invisible manner, says Jesus. According to them, it will be established in an instant by the all-powerful, irresistible intervention of God. No, says the Saviour; it requires slow germination, and only the dispositions of the heart can further it. Should we hasten its coming, and separate the bad from the good forthwith? "Wilt thou," the servant asks the Master, "that we go and

and the condition attached to its acquisition and possession." *Op. cit.*, p. 198. Cf. also Vosté, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 261.

gather up the cockle?" "No," He replies. . . . For effulgent suddenness, the Saviour substitutes invisible, slow elaboration; instead of an infallible act of God's omnipotence, he requires the collaboration of hearts and wills; to imminence he opposes the indefinite future.<sup>16</sup>

*The Fishing-Net:* Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a net cast into the sea and gathering in fish of every kind. When it was filled, they hauled it out, and sitting down on the beach, they gathered the good fish into vessels, but threw away the bad. So will it be at the end of the world. The angels will go out and separate the wicked from among the just, and will cast them into the furnace of fire, where there will be the weeping, and the gnashing of teeth (Matt. xiii. 47-50).

This parable repeats largely the lesson of the parable of the Weeds. With the coming of the kingdom of God there will not be a sudden and complete elimination of everything evil; rather will good and evil continue to exist in the world. The net catches fish,

<sup>16</sup> *Studies on the Gospels*, pp. 115, 116. Prado summarizes the lesson of the parable of the Weeds: "Ad finem usque mundi mali cum bonis in Ecclesia permixti versabuntur; quod et auditoribus proximis monitioni erat, ne, vulgari messianismo indulgentes (IV Esdr. 6, 27s.), Christi iudicium discriminans instare putarent; . . . Parabola tenor carpit eschatologistas, cum terrestres periodus Regni (quandiu duratura?) clare caelesti praeponatur; . . ." *Op. cit.*, p. 242. Vosté: "Ut plenior sensus huius parabola habeatur, iterum videndum est quibusnam Iudaeorum opinionibus contradiceret; nam, praeter sensum ac valorem suum absolutum, parabola Christi frequenter habent sensum relativum quoad coetaneos et auditores eius immediatos. . . . Quod ergo prophetae nuntiaverant, et ultimus maximusque prophetarum, Ioannes Baptista, nuntiabat sive de participatione spirituali ac perfecta regni messianici, sive de eius gloriosa periodo eschatologica, Iudaei intelligebant de theocratia davidica nationali quae omnes, Moysi oboedientes, comprehenderet. Hanc nationalem theocratiam perfectam, per Messiam in Palaestina inaugurandam, expectabant et discipuli. . . . Igitur formalis doctrina parabola zizaniorum haec est: In periodo terrestri Regni Dei ac Messiae semper habebuntur boni et mali, qui in consummatione saeculi tantum separandi sunt: filii nequam seu impii puniendi, filii regni vero seu iusti praemio donandi." *Op. cit.*, pp. 282-284. The teaching of the parable of the Weeds is opposed, therefore, both to eschatological Messianism, which transferred the kingdom of God entirely to the next world (see chap. 2), and to the popular materialistic and earthly Messianism, which expected a speedy establishment of the kingdom and the complete eradication of all evil on earth.

both good and bad. As long as the fishing is not over, they are left alive together. Only in the end will there take place the sorting of the good and the bad, a sorting that is to last forever. As Fillion says, speaking of the parable of the Net and the parable of the Weeds:

Thus, even in the Kingdom of God, even in the Church of the Messias, as in the wheat field where an enemy sowed cockle, as in the net which gathers in its meshes bad fish as well as good, evil exists at the side of virtue; and it will be so to the end of time. Then only will take place, and for ever, the separation of the two opposite elements. If we read again Christ's interpretation of the parable of the cockle, we are struck by the similarity of details in the two parables.<sup>17</sup>

*The Seed That Grows of Itself:* Thus is the kingdom of God, as though a man should cast seed into the earth, then sleep and rise, night and day, and the seed should sprout and grow without his knowing it. For of itself the earth bears the crop, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the fruit is ripe, immediately he puts in the sickle because the harvest has come (Mark iv. 26-29).

This is the last of the parables that make up the specific group of eight kingdom parables. The parable has to do with the seed that is cast into the ground, that grows and ripens of itself in the course of time. Again, the particular lesson that Christ is teaching in this parable has already been mentioned. The Jews expected that God would manifest His power in a startling and dramatic way; that He would establish His kingdom in its perfect state immediately; and that He would accomplish all this through a speedy and decisive victory over the enemies of the kingdom. But in this parable Christ teaches that while the power of God will bring about the successful establishment and spread of the kingdom, its development will follow the usual laws of growth. Time is a necessary condition of growth. The results for which the sower hopes will come only with the harvest. As Knox says: "Finally the Jew thinks of it (i. e., the kingdom) as a sudden violent upheaval, a catastrophe

<sup>17</sup> *The Life of Christ*, Vol. II, p. 427. Cf. also Fonck, *op. cit.*, p. 206.

of history; our Lord teaches that it will be a growth, gradual though it be rapid, akin in the method of its accomplishment to all that we know of organic growth in nature."<sup>18</sup>

In reference to the interpretation of this parable, Rose says:

It would be to miss the sense of this parable completely to deduce from it as foundational the predominant part of God in the formation of the kingdom, and to insist before all upon His initiation and final intervention. Absolutely, on the contrary, the role of the sower is reduced to a minimum: he sows and he reaps. The spontaneity, the slowness and silence of growth, quite apart from the action of the sower, is the incontestable teaching of Jesus.<sup>19</sup>

Lagrange, nevertheless, points out that the parable also contains the lesson of confidence in the power of God. In the course of his interpretation of this parable, he says: "Let us rest content with this lesson ourselves, a very expedient one when it was first delivered and equally opportune at all times: a lesson of confidence in the hidden power of the kingdom of God. That power cannot fail to produce a rich harvest at the time appointed by God; time is required for every work that involves growth."<sup>20</sup>

The discussion of this parable of the Seed that grows of itself brings us to the conclusion of our survey of these eight kingdom parables. In summarizing the lessons that they teach about the

<sup>18</sup> *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, p. 28. In reference to the kingdom parables in general, Knox says: "We shall not understand the theological import of our Lord's parables unless we remember that he was speaking to Jews, and Jews who were expecting to see a victorious Messiah and a world-wide kingdom. . . . All the time our Lord is correcting the Jewish habit of thought." *Op. cit.*, p. 5. Knox then proceeds, throughout his work, to interpret many of Christ's parables as containing a definitely dogmatic teaching on the kingdom and as being opposed in this teaching to current Jewish Messianic ideas. He includes the following parables in his consideration: the Good Samaritan, the Great Supper, the Wicked Husbandmen, the Laborers in the Vineyard, the Prodigal Son, Dives and Lazarus, the Marriage Feast, the Lost Sheep, the Publican and the Pharisee, the Two Sons. Cf., especially, pp. 5, 6, 12ff., 35, 72ff., 80ff., 94ff., 99, 100, 122.

<sup>19</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 115, note.

<sup>20</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 185.

kingdom of God, we may quote the words of Prat. After speaking of some of the erroneous Messianic notions of the Jews, Prat says:

It is against these and similar errors that the parables of the kingdom are directed. The Sower sets forth the universal destination of the Gospel and the necessity of human co-operation for its establishment in the soul. The Weeds and the Net show the double phase of the kingdom, and the mixture, in the first phase, of good and evil. The Mustard-Seed, the Leaven, and the Wheat which grows by itself, show the growth, more or less slow, more or less hidden, but unfailing and marvellous, of the kingdom of God. The Treasure and the Pearl teach that no price is too dear to pay for the happiness of being admitted into the kingdom.<sup>21</sup>

These eight kingdom parables seem to us today to be quite simple. They seem to be rather easy to understand. They are excellently designed, we should say, to describe various features of the kingdom of God. They were well adapted to give the people glimpses of the true nature of the kingdom. And yet we know that the Jewish people to whom they were delivered found them obscure. Therefore, the question naturally arises: Why was it that the people found these kingdom parables obscure?

It cannot be said that the parables in themselves were obscure. They are simple, interesting accounts. They deal with familiar, common, ordinary happenings. They are concerned with things that were part of the daily experience of the people. "All these farmers knew the grain of wheat, the grain of mustard-seed, and the grain of cockle; all these boatmen knew boats and nets and fish; there was no one, among these common folk, who had not a thousand times witnessed the rising of dough at home."<sup>22</sup> Moreover, the people knew that Christ was not just telling them plain stories with no lesson behind them. They were well-acquainted with the teaching method that used parables. They knew that they were to look beyond the story and try to grasp the lesson that the teacher was trying to impart to them. Furthermore, Christ told them what the

<sup>21</sup> *Jésus Christ*, I, 322. Cf. also Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 274, 275.

<sup>22</sup> Buzy, *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 371.

object of the parables was—what was the subject-matter of His teaching. It was something with which they were very familiar, the kingdom of God.

Our question still remains unanswered. It is clear, from what we have just said, that the cause of obscurity is not to be found in the parables themselves.<sup>23</sup> The answer really is that it was the circumstances under which the parables were delivered that made them obscure. Previously (in chapter one) we spoke of the various causes of obscurity in a parable. We explained that a parable may become obscure because of certain accidental circumstances. We mentioned that a parable becomes obscure if the object of the parable is not known. Again, a parable will be found obscure if the lesson of the parable is too difficult to comprehend, whether the difficulty be inherent in the lesson itself or be due to intellectual and emotional prejudices of the listeners. Now, in the particular instance of the kingdom parables the cause of the obscurity is to be found in these accidental circumstances. Not that the object of the parables was not known to the people who listened to our Lord, since He told them that He was speaking to them about the kingdom of God; but the lesson was hard to grasp—it was difficult in itself and the contrary Messianic ideas of the Jews rendered it more difficult.

The first cause of obscurity in the kingdom parables, then, was the lesson itself, or, to be more precise, the spiritual nature of the true Messianic kingdom that was the object of Christ's parables. As Lagrange says: "... the parables, so familiar as they are in themselves, are all more or less concerned with religion. Religion, that is, the relations of man with God and of God with man, is, by definition, the domain of mystery, since no one can boast of knowing God or His designs except him to whom God has

<sup>23</sup> In reference to the kingdom parables, Huby says: "Devant un auditoire oriental, rebelle aux abstractions et accessible au seul langage figuré, Jésus, pour enseigner le mystère du Royaume de Dieu, ne pouvait confier sa doctrine à de meilleurs véhicules que les comparaisons et paraboles, ni choisir de symboles plus expressifs de la réalité qu'ils signifiaient." *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 102.

revealed them.”<sup>24</sup> And Durand says, in reference to the causes of obscurity in the parables:

The following reason is another, and it is basic. Jesus Christ says Himself in St. Mark (iv. 11) that he is teaching in the parables “the mystery of the kingdom of God.” *Mystery* here does not mean something secret, which is revealed only to an elite group, in private—an esoteric doctrine; but rather that which is of its very nature difficult to comprehend, above the human mind, left to itself without the help of light from on high. Cf. Mark iv. 11; Matt. xi. 25. And indeed, it suffices to have read the parables of the Gospel once to realize that they treat of the divine origin of the Kingdom of heaven, of its heavenly destinies, and of its development according to a law of humility and of abnegation.<sup>25</sup>

Added to this initial difficulty—and constituting in itself an even greater difficulty—was the fact that the minds of the Jewish people were imbued with Messianic preconceptions that were directly opposed to Christ’s spiritual message. As Prat says, referring to these kingdom parables: “For us who have a precise notion of the kingdom of God, they have little obscurity; but the Jews of that time were not in our position. What ideas, not only inexact, but altogether false, did they have about the kingdom of God! How could they understand the parable of the Weeds, for example, unless they asked for an explanation?”<sup>26</sup> Durand likewise says: “How could they have understood the parables of the seed which falls into the ground to grow there silently, of the leaven, of the mustard-seed, and so many others concerning humility and Christian abnegation—they who dreamed of a Messianic kingdom brilliant and irresistible?”<sup>27</sup> And, after eliminating other possible causes of the obscurity of the kingdom parables, Buzy says:

These various causes having been thus eliminated, the obscurity of the parables can come only from the second term of these

<sup>24</sup> “Le but des paraboles d’après l’Évangile selon Saint Marc,” *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 19.

<sup>25</sup> “Paraboles de l’Évangile,” *DAFC*, Vol. III, cols. 1568, 1569.

<sup>26</sup> *Jésus Christ*, I, 340, 341.

<sup>27</sup> “Paraboles de l’Évangile,” *DAFC*, Vol. III, col. 1569.

comparisons, from the concept itself of the Kingdom of God. It is a fact recognized by all, that the popular masses entertained an ideal of the Kingdom which, on several essential points, differed from that of Jesus. Consequently, when there was question of the Kingdom in the discourses of Jesus, the Master intended one meaning and the listeners understood another. . . . It seems to us that the principal cause of the obscurity is to be found here.<sup>28</sup>

The cause of the obscurity of the kingdom parables, therefore, is to be sought not in the parables themselves, but in the accidental circumstances under which the parables were delivered. A spiritual message is always difficult for men to grasp. Men are ordinarily so engrossed in worldly and material concerns that a really spiritual message seems foreign and strange to their ears. Christ's spiritual message about the kingdom of God, even under ordinary circumstances, would not have been easy to grasp. That ordinary difficulty was greatly increased by the fact that the Jews entertained ideas about the kingdom directly opposed to the teaching of Christ.

Our Lord, of course, realized that the parables of the kingdom would be found obscure by the Jewish people. Still He deliberately chose them. And more—He was motivated in this choice solely by His infinite wisdom, mercy and goodness. He realized that a gradual revelation of His message was necessary. He realized that He could not, immediately and from the very beginning, speak to the people clearly and simply about the true nature of the kingdom and the true nature of the work of the Messias. He knew that the

<sup>28</sup> *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 373, 374. Referring to the slowness of the disciples in understanding the parables of Christ, Fonck says: "The band of believing disciples had been accustomed from childhood to share in the earthly expectations which their Jewish compatriots had formed regarding the coming of the Messiah. Hence the sublime lessons of the true nature and the real value of His kingdom and His claims on mankind did not really come home to them. Many of the parables, therefore, held what were for them obscure and unsolved riddles although they were in themselves calculated to bring home to them in the clearest manner the truths of the kingdom of Heaven." *Op. cit.*, p. 28. Cf. also Skrinjar, "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'écriture sainte," *BI*, 1930 (11), p. 445; Batifol, *L'enseignement de Jésus*, p. 27; Davis, "The Gospels as a Source of Dogma," *New Testament*, pp. 300, 301; Vosté, *op. cit.*, I, 149.

people would refuse to listen to Him. His efforts would be foredoomed to failure. There would be no chance of success. It was much more prudent, and therefore much more in keeping with His infinite goodness and mercy to present His teaching in a gradual revelation. He would gradually reveal to the people the true spiritual nature of the kingdom of God and the true spiritual nature of His work as the promised Messiah. Lagrange therefore says in reference to the obscurity of the kingdom parables:

The obscurity of the parables was due to the nature of things, but that obscurity was to be only for a time. The teaching that was being given of the kingdom of God afforded simply an instantaneous view of the new order of things begun. But even so Jesus was giving a great light. If there was still obscurity, clearness would come later. Pay good heed, Jesus said, to what you are hearing. Even by itself it is a most precious gift. For one gift leads on to another if only a man has the desire to profit by what he has received.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>29</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 191. The quotation continues: "If he has not that desire even that little light will itself go out." The last part of Lagrange's statement is obviously a commentary on the words of Christ: "For to him who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away" (Matt. xiii. 12). Elsewhere Lagrange says: "On dirait que Jésus proportionne toujours la vérité à l'utilité de ses auditeurs. Il ne leur donne que ce qui est nécessaire, mais il offre toujours plus. Trop de lumière ne servirait de rien, si ses auditeurs ne savaient pas se l'assimiler et en vivre. Les paraboles font de la clarté et en font entrevoir encore davantage. Elles provoquent la curiosité, ou plutôt elles sont un appel à la bonne volonté." "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (vii), p. 18. Cf. also p. 20; Rose, *Studies on the Gospels*, p. 104. Huby, "Comparées au Sermon sur la Montagne, les paraboles marquent un progrès dans la lumière. . . . Les paraboles jetaient donc de nouvelles clartés sur la notion du Règne de Dieu: elles affirmaient son existence sur terre, son développement progressif, le mélange, en sa forme visible, des bons et des méchants, et le grand coup qui, à la fin des temps, fera cesser ce mélange." *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, pp. 102, 103.

## COMPLEMENTARY NOTE TO CHAPTER III

SIMILARITIES BETWEEN CHRIST'S PARABLES AND THOSE  
OF THE RABBIS

Our Lord often introduced His parables with the words, "The kingdom of heaven is like . . .," or with a similar formula. This formula was not peculiar to the parables of Christ. We know that the Jewish rabbis used similar introductory formulas. Strack-Billerbeck list a number of such forms, taken from the works of the rabbis, that are much the same as those used by our Lord. In commenting on Mark iv. 30, which reads: "To what shall we liken the kingdom of God; or to what parable shall we compare it?" Strack-Billerbeck say:

Zur Einführung von Gleichnissen dienen im Rabbinischen verschiedene Formeln:

1. Das blosse  $\text{ל}$  zu ergänzen ist in diesem Fall das Wort: "gleich."
2.  $\text{משל ל}$  (dem  $\text{ל}$  der Vergleichung ist das absolute  $\text{משל}$  voranges-tellt). . . .
3.  $\text{משל למה הדבר דומה}$  = ein Gleichnis. Womit ist das zu vergleichen oder lässt sich das vergleichen? . . .
4.  $\text{משלן משל למה הדבר דומה לי}$  = man hat ein Gleichnis gesagt. Womit lässt sich das vergleichen? Mit dem und dem. . . .
5.  $\text{אמשול לך משל למה הדבר דומה לי}$  = ich will dir ein Gleichnis sagen. Womit lässt sich das vergleichen? Mit dem und dem. . . . (*Kommentar zum Neuen Testament aus Talmud und Midrasch*, Vol. II, pp. 7, 8.)

The parables adduced by the authors as examples show further resemblances between the parables of Christ and those of the rabbis. We shall say more about these other resemblances presently.

In the course of his treatment of the rabbinic *mashal* (*Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 135-169), Buzy likewise indicates the resemblances between Christ's parables and those of the rabbis. Buzy lists (*op. cit.*, p. 104) the various formulae of introduction used by the rabbis; but his listing is not so complete or detailed as that of Strack-Billerbeck. Among the rabbinic parables quoted here by Buzy are some wherein there is a mixture of allegorical and parabolic elements. Therefore, in order to show the similarity between Christ's parables and the rabbinic parables in regard to introductory formula, general structure, and the combining of allegorical and parabolic elements, we shall quote two of these parables, adding part of Buzy's explanation in each case.

Sur Ex., xiv, 27: désastre des Égyptiens dans la mer Rouge:

"Un mâchâl. À quoi ressemble la chose? À une colombe qui fuyait devant un épervier et pénétra dans la salle à manger du roi. Le roi lui ouvrit la fenêtre de l'est, et la colombe entra et elle fut sauvée. L'épervier y pénétra

après elle. Alors le roi ferma sur lui toutes les fenêtres et se mit à l'accabler de traits."

Ce mâchâl est une allégorie parabolisante. Le roi, c'est Dieu. La colombe et l'épervier sont d'heureuses métaphores des Hébreux et des Egyptiens. . . . (Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 151. Vosté also quotes this parable. Cf. *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 46.)

Rabbi Siméon ben Eleazar (T<sup>4</sup>) veut expliquer comment les fils de Noé, ayant transgressé les sept préceptes noachiques, auraient été encore moins fidèles à garder les 613 préceptes de la Thôrah.

"Un mâchâl. Cela ressemble à un roi, qui établit deux inspecteurs; l'un fut préposé aux provisions de paille, l'autre aux provisions d'argent et d'or. Celui qui avait été préposé à la paille, donna des soupçons (de malhonnêteté) et de plus, il murmurait de ce qu'on ne l'avait pas préposé à l'argent et à l'or. Celui qui avait été préposé à l'argent et à l'or, lui dit: Vaurien (raqa . . .) ! tu as commis des détournements dans la paille . . . , combien plus en aurais-tu commis dans l'argent et l'or!"

Le roi est certainement la métaphore de Dieu. La paille représente les préceptes noachiques; l'or et l'argent les préceptes de la Loi. . . . (Buzy, *op. cit.*, pp. 148, 149; Vosté also quotes this parable; *op. cit.*, p. 44.)

These examples show how far the resemblances between the parables of Christ and those of the rabbis extend. Vosté lists all the points of resemblance as follows (pp. 46-51):

I—Formulae introductoriae. . . .

II—Typi.

Frequentissime agitur in parabolis rabbinicis *de rege*, de eius comitatu militari, de itineribus eius atque operibus. . . . Item frequenter in iisdem parabolis agitur de patre et de filio eius, de servis, de palatio. . . .

Apud Synopticos similiter occurrunt, rarius tamen, *Königs-gleichnisse* seu parabola regis. . . . Frequentius occurrunt parabola patris ac patris-familias . . . ; item parabola servorum. . . .

Frequentius autem recurrunt Synoptici ad facta egregia et varia naturae agrestis, Dei speculi. . . .

III—Nexus inter typum et antitypum.

1. Sedulo iam notandum est, relationem typi ad antitypum fieri—litterarie saltem—*cum persona vel obiecto principali typi*, minime vero cum eo quod in typo formaliter refertur ad antitypum; hoc autem accidit tum apud Rabbinos, tum apud Synopticos. . . . Matt. xiii. 24. . . .

2. Frequens est apud Rabbinos, emphasi parum eleganti et forsitan audientibus minus amoena, conclusio *a minori ad maius*; . . . Idem autem haud raro in sermonibus Christiprehenditur, sed quanto elegantius! Verbi gratia apud Matt. vi. 30. . . .

After discussing the resemblances, Buzy raises the question (p. 165): ". . . ; comment expliquer cette ressemblance entre les paraboles de Jésus et celles des

Rabbins?" In the course of his answer, he says: "Ces formules devaient déjà être courantes dans le monde rabbinique, à l'époque de Jésus. D'autre part, les formules sont inséparables des mechâlim eux-mêmes. Elles n'existaient pas à l'état de cadres abstraits, prêtes à s'adapter à n'importe quelle histoire; si on les connaissait avant Jésus, ce n'était que par les mechâlim auxquels elles étaient jointes. Aussi bien, à y regarder de près, les paraboles évangéliques portent-elles l'empreinte d'un genre fixé. Nulle part ne se révèlent les hésitations d'un génie à l'essai; les modalités que nous signalions tout à l'heure, paraissent aussi impersonnelles que dans le Talmud; et même s'il y a une différence, personne ne fera difficulté de la reconnaître toute à l'avantage de Jésus. Les paraboles évangéliques sont des chefs-d'oeuvre, tandis que les mechâlim rabbiniques sont déjà en pleine decadence: exercice d'école, genre mort."

Vosté concludes his discussion with these words (p. 53): "Methodus parabolica in usu erat ante Iesum vel saltem tempore ipso neo-testamentario, frequentissime quidem in scholis Palaestinae, rarius vero inter rabbinos babylo-nenses. Nequit admitti, Doctores Iudaeos mutuasse a Nazareno methodum didacticam tam characteristicam, quam potius ex odio erga christianos vitassent. Ideo Dominus Noster usus est docendi stilo communi tempore suo inter populum suum."

Oesterley likewise points out the resemblances between the parables of Christ and those of the rabbis and notes the superiority of the parables of our Lord. After mentioning the themes found in the parables of the rabbis, he says: "These parabolical themes seem to have formed the framework of many of the Rabbinical parables; they are manipulated and filled in in various ways by different Rabbis in accordance with the teaching it was desired to inculcate. This point is of special interest inasmuch as in a number of the Gospel parables these very parabolic themes are utilized; in some cases our Lord uses the same theme in different connections. One cannot, however, fail to notice the immense difference both in subject-matter and treatment and, above all, in application, between the Gospel parables and those of the Rabbis; interesting and instructive as the latter often are, they stand on an altogether lower plane. It is not prejudice that prompts us to say this—far from that, we have a feeling of warm sympathy with a great deal of the Rabbinical teaching; but we are convinced that any impartial reader of the two sets of parables, the Gospel and the Rabbinical, will be forced to admit that the latter compare very unfavorably with the former." W. Oesterley, *The Gospel Parables in the Light of their Jewish Background*, pp. 10, 11. Cf. also Trench, *Notes on the Parables of our Lord*, pp. 46, 49, for further comment on the similarity between the Gospel and the rabbinic parables and on the superiority of those of our Lord.

## CHAPTER IV

### GRADUAL MESSIANIC REVELATION IN THE GOSPELS

THE basis of the thesis that we have developed thus far is the opposition between the Messianic ideas of Christ and those of the Jews and the consequent need of a gradual revelation. Up to the present we have referred only briefly and in passing to the Gospel evidence for this opposition in Messianic concepts. In the present chapter, therefore, we propose to study the Gospel records from this point of view.

That Christ was truly the expected Messias is the clear teaching of the Gospels. Christ professed Himself to be the Messias, and He was acknowledged as such by others. It will suffice for our purposes merely to recall several pertinent scriptural passages. At Caesarea Philippi St. Peter made this solemn acknowledgment: "Thou art the Christ, the Son of the Living God" (Matt. xvi. 17). Christ gladly accepted and confirmed this profession of faith. He said to Peter: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven." Later, during His trial before the Sanhedrin Christ was adjured by Caiphas the high-priest: "I adjure thee by the living God that thou tell us whether thou art the Christ, the Son of God" (Matt. xxvi. 63). Our Lord answered: "Thou hast said it" (Matt. xxvi. 64). Thus, both in public and in private Christ proclaimed Himself to be the promised Messias.<sup>1</sup>

Christ taught that the kingdom He had come to establish was a spiritual kingdom. Recall the trial of Christ before Pilate. Pilate asked Christ: "Art thou the king of the Jews?" (Luke xxiii. 3). Our Lord answered: "Thou sayest it" (Luke xxiii. 3). But our Lord went on to explain the true nature of His kingdom: "My kingdom is not of this world. If my kingdom were of this world, my

<sup>1</sup> For a brief discussion of Christ's gradual revelation of His Messiahship and especially of His preference for the title, Son of Man, confer note A at the end of this chapter.

followers would have fought that I might not be delivered to the Jews. But, as it is, my kingdom is not from here" (John xviii. 36). Christ's kingdom, then, was a spiritual kingdom. And therefore it was to be established not through military conquest but through spiritual means. It was to be established through the sacrifice of Christ on Calvary. The essential work which Christ had come to perform was to offer His life in perfect sacrifice on the Cross. That was the means He had chosen to free men from the dominion of Satan and to admit them as members into the kingdom of God. At the Last Supper Christ said, having in mind the agonizing death He was to undergo on the next day: "... this is my blood of the new covenant, which is being shed for many unto the forgiveness of sins" (Matt. xxvi. 28). On a previous occasion He had foretold: "I am the good shepherd . . . and I lay down my life for my sheep" (John x. 14, 15). Thus, a spiritual kingdom was to be established through spiritual means. Furthermore, since the kingdom is spiritual, the members of the kingdom must be spiritual.<sup>2</sup> Not membership in a particular, privileged race, but spiritual qualities are demanded of those who wish to become members of the kingdom. Humility is essential. "Amen I say to you, unless you turn and become like little children, you will not enter into the kingdom of

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 269, 270; Swete, *Studies in the Teaching of our Lord*, pp. 23-25, 61-64, 161-163.

Referring to the fact that Christ sometimes described the blessings of the kingdom in terms of earthly happiness (cf., e.g., Luke xxii. 30; Matt. xxvi. 29), Felder says: "The whole teaching of Jesus in reference to the kingdom is so essentially spiritual, and he so effectually excludes from it the coarse ideas of his contemporaries, that we must see in the above expressions merely a strikingly figurative representation of the supersensuous bliss and blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. It could not have been explained otherwise, either to the disciples, who were thoroughly earthly in their ideas, or to the Oriental, who always wants to speak figuratively and can scarcely learn in any other way." H. Felder, *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, p. 180. Frey: "Et si le ciel est parfois comparé à un festin où l'on s'assoit pour manger et boire, il s'agit là de figures reçues pour signifier le bonheur, car, en réalité, les bienheureux seront 'comme les anges, fils de Dieu, fils de résurrection.'" J. Frey, "Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 272, 273. Cf. also the complementary note E at the end of this chapter.

heaven. Whoever, therefore, humbles himself as this little child, he is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven" (Matt. xviii. 3, 4). The members of the kingdom, the followers of the Messiah, must deny themselves. Suffering and even persecution will be their lot in this life. "If anyone wishes to come after me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow me" (Matt. xvi. 24). "No servant is greater than his master. If they have persecuted me, they will persecute you also; . . ." (John xv. 20).

At the same time, the Gospel accounts show with equal clarity that the Jews were expecting a worldly, materialistic, and nationalistic kingdom. It will suffice for our purposes, again, merely to indicate certain significant passages. Our procedure will be to observe the effects of Christ's teaching and His miracles on the three different groups which comprised His listeners: (1) the people; (2) the disciples; (3) the religious leaders of the nation.

(1) The people reacted quickly and eagerly to Christ's manifestations of power. When He performed miracles, He was acting according to their ideas of the Messiah. The Gospel tells us, for example, that when Christ performed the miracle of the multiplication of the loaves and fishes, the people wanted to make Him their king. Christ had to flee to escape their enthusiasm. "So when Jesus perceived that they would come to take him by force and make him king, he fled again to the mountain, himself alone" (John vi. 15).<sup>3</sup>

<sup>3</sup> From the reaction of the people to the miracle of the loaves and fishes it is easy to understand why Christ sometimes imposed silence in regard to His miracles. Cf., e.g., Matt. ix. 30; Mark i. 44, viii. 26. As manifestations of power the miracles were calculated to confirm the people in their false Messianic ideas. Further, any extremist and revolutionary reactions of the people would only jeopardize the continuance of the mission of Christ. As far as the Roman authorities were concerned Messianism meant insurrection; and they were prepared to put down even the beginnings of a revolt. As Prat says, "Il fallait ménager l'extrême susceptibilité de l'autorité romaine, si prompt à s'alarmer au seul nom d'un royaume juif." *Jésus Christ*, I, 339. Besides, the Jewish leaders had early decided against Christ. A popular demonstration would only have afforded them a welcome pretext for taking definite and decisive steps against Him.

These comments apply equally to Christ's admonition to the three Apostles

The reaction of the people to the spiritual message of Christ was just the opposite. This is plainly evident, for example, in a passage of the Gospel of St. John. On the very next day after the miracle of the loaves and fishes Christ spoke to the same group of people who had witnessed the miracle. On this occasion, at Capharnaum, Christ spoke about the Holy Eucharist. As Lagrange says:

This instruction at Capharnaum, after the multiplication of the loaves, was of a crucial nature. Jesus explains, as He was bound eventually to do, that His mission is of a spiritual character. . . . Jesus begins the conversation by asking them to examine the real motives for their recent messianic excitement. His multiplication of the loaves had seemed to them a foretaste of the superabundance of good things that they looked for at the hands of the Messiah: crops as high as horsemen, vines flowing with wine like rivers. Let them rather seek the food of the soul, the food that abides unto eternal life. . . .<sup>4</sup>

Remember that these people at Capharnaum were not hostile to Christ. They had seen Him perform a wonderful miracle just the day before. They were disposed, therefore, to listen intently to all that He would say. They showed good will. And we notice that Christ recognized this good will and answered their questions with great kindness. But they could not rise to the level of His thoughts. Christ spoke of eternal life and of the last day. To them that meant doing away with happiness on this earth and depriving them of just revenge for all the ills they had endured.<sup>5</sup> Their own

who witnessed His transfiguration on Mount Thabor. He said to them: "Tell the vision to no one, till the Son of Man be risen from the dead" (Matt. xvii. 9). Christ had to avoid everything that might confirm the people in their false Messianic ideas.

<sup>4</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 227.

<sup>5</sup> "Bowed down, as they were, even after the Babylonian Captivity, under the yoke of Persia, Greece, and Rome, the Jews were wont to associate, before anything else, with the idea of the Messiah the hope of their national restoration and recovered independence. For them that was the essential thing." L. Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, I, 198. Frey explains how natural was the Jewish expectation of a nationalistic, political kingdom: "À vrai dire,—et nous touchons ici à une des questions fondamentales dans le problème qui nous occupe,—les Juifs, traqués comme des bêtes fauves sous l'oppression séleucide, toujours

Messianic expectations were pushed into the background. Their hopes of an imminent triumph over their enemies and of their personal participation in the joys of the kingdom were abolished. They were disheartened and they walked away. A little later, when Christ was alone with His disciples, He explained why His message had not been accepted. The contrast between the spiritual and the material was too great. "It is the spirit that gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I have spoken to you are spirit and life" (John vi. 64).

These few Gospel passages show how great an obstacle the Messianic ideas of the Jews presented to the teaching of Christ. To overcome this obstacle and to gain acceptance of His message, Christ knew that He would have to present a gradual revelation. He would have to prepare the minds and hearts of the people and gradually reveal to them the true nature of the kingdom of God and the true nature and function of the Messiah. As Vosté says: "This is certain, that the people were possessed of preconceived notions about the national and political kingdom of the Messiah, as they listened to His preaching and followed Him. Therefore they did not fully recognize Christ, but rather considered Him as a wonder-worker and national liberator. . . . They had to be gradually weaned from such a prejudiced opinion, by patience and prudent accommodation."<sup>6</sup>

(2) The disciples of Christ were privileged to enjoy His intimate companionship. They became thoroughly acquainted with His

entourés d'ennemis, tombés, après une courte période d'indépendance nationale, sous le joug de Rome et de la dynastie iduméenne des Hérodes, en étaient arrivés à concevoir le royaume messianique comme l'exact contre-pied des tristes conditions dans lesquelles ils se trouvaient alors. Le peuple élu est humilié, asservi, foulé aux pieds par les Gentils; les tribus sont dispersées, la Ville sainte et le Temple sont profanés par la présence de l'oppresseur. Quoi de plus naturel que d'attendre du Libérateur promis le renversement des rôles, l'humiliation des ennemis, la glorification d'Israël, le retour des tribus, le rétablissement de la dynastie nationale dans toute sa splendeur, un afflux extraordinaire de biens de toute sorte?" "Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 146.

<sup>6</sup> *Parabolae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, I, 158. Cf. also Skrinjar, "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1931 (12), p. 31.

sublime character through continuous association with Him. They witnessed His many miracles; and they saw likewise that He refused to accept the position of power and glory that the people offered Him because of these manifestations of power. They listened continually to His teaching; and we know from such instances as the explanation of the parables of the Sower and of the Weeds that they received special, private instruction from our Lord. They were favored from on high with special revelation; as Christ told Peter on the occasion when Peter made his solemn profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi: "Blessed art thou, Simon Bar-Jona, for flesh and blood has not revealed this to thee, but my Father in heaven" (Matt. xvi. 17).

Yet how obstinately did the disciples cling to their false Messianic hopes and ideals! They shared the dreams of the people and were waiting for a political and national Messiah. Typical of their slowness in grasping the spiritual content of Christ's message is an incident related in the Gospels of St. Matthew (xvi. 5-12) and St. Mark (viii. 13-21). On this occasion Christ was alone with His disciples. He thought it opportune to warn them: "Take heed: beware of the leaven of the Pharisees, and of the leaven of Herod" (Mark viii. 15). Christ, of course, was not referring to material bread. His mind was taken up with spiritual concerns. But not so the disciples. "And they began to argue among themselves, saying, 'We have no bread'" (Mark viii. 16). And the Gospel tells us that Jesus rebuked them for their lack of spiritual perception:

Why do you argue that you have no bread? Do you not yet perceive, nor yet understand? Is your heart still blinded? Though you have eyes do you not see, and though you have ears do you not hear? And do you not remember? When I broke the five loaves among five thousand, how many baskets full of fragments did you take up? . . . And when I broke the seven loaves among four thousand, how many large baskets of fragments did you take up? . . . How is it that you do not yet understand? (Mark viii. 17-21).

The disciples, then, were slow to grasp the spiritual import of the teaching of their Master. Consider another incident. Shortly after St. Peter's profession of faith at Caesarea Philippi, Christ

deemed it timely to remove the illusions the disciples still had about the Messias and an earthly triumph. He revealed to them that it would be His lot to suffer and die. Peter was shocked at the assertion. He protested: "Far be it from thee, O Lord; this will never happen to thee" (Matt. xvi. 22). But Christ rebuked Peter—for measuring all things according to human standards. "Get behind me, satan, thou art a scandal to me; for thou dost not mind the things of God, but those of men" (Matt. xvi. 23).<sup>7</sup>

The disciples found it hard to give up their desire for a place of prominence in the Messianic kingdom of which they dreamed. There are a number of texts which reveal their worldly ambition. "Now a discussion arose among them, which of them was the greatest" (Luke ix. 46).<sup>8</sup> But Christ tells them plainly what conditions are necessary for a position of power in the true kingdom. He who is in a position of authority must consider himself the servant of all. He must exercise his privileges and prerogatives only in the interests of others. The members of the kingdom must not desire power and authority; they must desire to make themselves small by humility of heart. The least is the greatest. "For he who is the least among you, he is the greatest" (Luke ix. 48). "If any man wishes to be first, he shall be last of all, and servant of all" (Mark ix. 34).

Even after the Resurrection we find the Apostles still lacking in spiritual perception. Just before the Ascension they ask Christ: "Lord, wilt thou at this time restore the kingdom to Israel?" (Acts i. 6). Their understanding of the nature of the kingdom is still imperfect. They are still thinking of the kingdom in terms of material splendor. They are still hoping for a national restoration. As Fonck says: "The disciples, as we have already observed, were imbued with the prejudices of their nation and had an idea of the

<sup>7</sup> Lebreton mentions this incident and comments: "More than once in the following months Christ repeated that He would be delivered up, condemned, scourged, and crucified. The Apostles were grieved, but at once turned their minds from these statements, which they could not bring themselves to believe. So, when the catastrophe came at last, it took them unawares and overwhelmed them at a blow." *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, II, 445. Cf., e. g., Matt. xvii. 21, 22; xx. 17-19.

<sup>8</sup> Cf. also Matt. xx. 20-28; Mark x. 35-45.

Messianic kingdom of God on earth which was in part wholly erroneous. Thus we gather from their question on the day of the Ascension (Act i. 6) that they expected as the result of their divine Lord and Master's intervention that the new kingdom would be publicly manifested with great splendor."<sup>9</sup>

(3) The religious leaders of the Jewish people at the time of Christ were the Pharisees. Their authority in matters of religion and worship had developed gradually and was based on their reputation for fidelity to the Law and the rabbinic traditions. As Schürer says:

Amidst all the changes of government, under Romans and Herodians, the Pharisees maintained their spiritual hegemony. . . . the decisive influence upon public affairs was in the hands, not of the Sadducees, but of the Pharisees. . . . This great influence actually exercised by the Pharisees is but the reverse side of the exclusive position which they took up. It was just because their requirements stretched so far, and because they only recognized as true Israelites those who observed them in their full strictness, that they had so imposing an effect upon the multitude, who recognized in these exemplary saints their own ideal and their legitimate leaders.<sup>10</sup>

<sup>9</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, pp. 118, 119. Buzy says, referring to his previous comments on this same verse, Acts i. 6: "Nous avons vu combien était vivace leur idéal premier, même au jour de l'Ascension, après plusieurs mois de commerce avec l'Instituteur de l'idéal contraire. Il ne faudra rien moins que les charismes de la Pentecôte, l'approfondissement de la doctrine de Jésus et les leçons de l'expérience pour porter le coup de grâce à leur messianisme national et les ouvrir enfin au messianisme spirituel." *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 377. Cf. also Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 399; Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 143.

<sup>10</sup> *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 28. The Pharisaic party was rather small in number. Josephus indicates that at the time of Herod the Great there were only 6,000 Pharisees. Cf. *Jewish Antiquities*, 17:2:4. The Sadducees were the party of the priesthood. Josephus mentions that they were few in number. He says, after speaking of their teaching: ". . . but this doctrine is received but by a few, yet by those still of the greatest dignity." *Op. cit.*, 18:1:4. The Scribes were the official interpreters and teachers of the law. Their function can perhaps best be described by saying that they were "bible-experts." Of their relationship

Josephus, the Jewish historian, compares the teachings and influence of the Pharisees with that of the Sadducees. He says:

For the present I wish merely to explain that the Pharisees had passed on to the people certain regulations handed down by former generations and not recorded in the Law of Moses, for which reason they are rejected by the Sadducean group, who hold that only those regulations should be considered valid which were written down (in Scripture), and that those which had been handed down by former generations need not be observed. And concerning these matters the two parties came to have controversies and serious differences, the Sadducees having the confidence of the wealthy alone but no following among the populace, while the Pharisees have the support of the masses.<sup>11</sup>

Schürer therefore says, in reference to the teachings and objectives of the Pharisaic party:

It was the germ proper, which was distinguished from the rest of the mass only by its greater strictness and consistency. Hence the law, in that multiplicity of complication which had been given to it by the labors of the scribes during the course of centuries, was the basis of all its efforts. To carry this out in every point was the beginning and end of all its endeavors.<sup>12</sup>

The Pharisees, as well as the people, were expecting a political Messiah, a national hero. As Felder says, referring to the kingdom of God according to the "rabbinical views which were current among the contemporaries of Jesus": "It is true it based itself upon the religious fundamental Law of the Torah and had a theocratic character, but in principle it was conceived as thoroughly earthly and political."<sup>13</sup> Not only was it far from the minds of the Pharisees that the Messiah would be a divine Savior; He was not even ex-

with the Pharisees and the Sadducees, Fillion says: "Nearly all of them were members of the sect of the Pharisees. . . . That is why our Lord joins their names in His terrible denunciations. The Sadducees, however, had their doctors, too, who explained the law conformable to the special tendencies of their party." *The Life of Christ*, I, 176, 177.

<sup>11</sup> *Jewish Antiquities*, 13:10:6. Cf. also 18:1:3.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 10.

<sup>13</sup> *Christ and the Critics*, Vol. I, p. 163.

pected to assume the role of a religious reformer. In the opinion of the religious leaders, the nation of Israel was not in need of reform or of spiritual redemption.<sup>14</sup> The nation had the Law. The Law was the firm foundation of its religious and moral life. And the Law was perfect in itself. It needed no completion.

This attitude of the Pharisees toward the Law, and the role they expected the Messiah to assume, are expressed very well in these words of Felder:

The Rabbis not only caused the religious private life of the people to be entirely absorbed in devotion to the Law, in comparison with which prayers and sacrifices were much less important, . . . but, according to them, the books of the Law contain the whole of religion, and the Torah is the revelation, in which God has included everything that he in any way can reveal through all eternity. . . . The great means of redemption and the great act of redemption is excellence in matters of the Law, and that only. To complete this act of redemption is, however, not, of course, the work of the Messiah. . . . His redeeming work—if one can still speak of it as such—consists in the fact that he, by word and example, encourages and perpetuates faithfulness to the law. . . . Should he once disclose the necessity of a religious regeneration for Israel, or should he wish to proclaim a religion surpassing the Mosaism of the Rabbis, he is a traitor to the Holy of Holies, a blasphemer. . . . He has simply to toss the reward into the lap of self-redeemed Judaism by founding the Messianic kingdom; or, rather, by the re-establishment of the kingdom of God in the form in which it had already existed on Sinai, according to the fancy of the Rabbis; as a worldly—yes, exceedingly worldly—theocracy. . . . The immense mistake lay in the fact that this Messianic conception, whether practical or theoretical, was applied to a kingdom of God which in a secular and political sense had acquired a changed value. . . . The rabbinical-Jewish Messiah is also, on that very account, merely a man, both in origin and by nature.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>14</sup> "In the absence of felt need of deliverance from sin, we can understand how the Rabbinic tradition found no place for the Priestly office of the Messiah, and how even His claims to be the Prophet of His people are almost entirely overshadowed by His appearance as their King and Deliverer." Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, I, 167.

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 155-158, 160, 162. Frey: "Mais les Juifs n'ont jamais fait du Messie ni un législateur souverain avec pouvoir de modifier la Loi mo-

How, then, did the Pharisees react to the teaching of Christ? The Gospels show that they unhesitatingly rejected Christ as the promised Messiah. He had none of the qualifications they were expecting in the Deliverer of Israel. They first rose in opposition when they saw that He was pretending to be a religious teacher. Their hostility became much more intense when they realized that He was claiming to be divine. Finally they succeeded in doing away with Him.

It was in the Sermon on the Mount that Christ presented Himself as a religious teacher and reformer. In the sermon Christ definitely opposed the ideas of the Pharisees on the essence of religion and morality. The formula our Lord used, "You have heard that it was said . . . But I say to you . . .," placed Him in direct opposition to the Pharisaic interpretation of the Law, as that interpretation was represented in the traditional, rabbinical accretions to the Law. These additions were considered by the Pharisees to be as sacred as the Law itself. As Schürer says:

The Halacha or traditional law, as developed and settled by the labors of the scribes, was declared to be as legally binding as the written Torah. Rabbi Eleasar of Modein said: "He who interprets Scripture in opposition to tradition . . . has no part in the world to come" (*Aboth* iii. 11). . . . The traditional interpretation and the traditional law are thus declared absolutely binding. And it is consequently but consistent when deviation from these is declared even more culpable than deviation from

saïque, ni le porteur d'aucune révélation nouvelle. Il ne pourra que confirmer le peuple dans l'observation de la Thora dont les prescriptions, spécialement en ce qui concerne le Temple et les sacrifices, garderont leur valeur à jamais. Les Juifs s'accordaient généralement à dire que le Messie devait être leur *Sauveur*. Mais en quel sens? D'après la plupart des écrits de l'époque, la libération politique était sa fonction principale. . . . Toutefois, si le Messie veut voir régner autour de lui la sainteté et s'il est l'appui des justes, il ne paraît nulle part faire quoi que ce soit pour procurer la justice à ceux qui ne l'ont pas: il se contente de la constater là où elle est et de procéder aux discriminations nécessaires. Nulle part il n'intervient pour effacer le péché existant ni pour sauver les païens, et jamais le judaïsme n'attribua au Messie le pouvoir de remettre les péchés." "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), pp. 144, 145.

the written Thorah. *It is more culpable to teach contrary to the precepts of the scribes, than contrary to the Thorah itself* (Sanhedrin xi. 3).<sup>16</sup>

Fillion likewise says:

... they did not hesitate to place their doctrines and precepts of men (Mark vii. 7) on a par with the commandments of God. They even had the effrontery to claim that the former excelled the latter in worth. "The words of the Scribes," they said, "are more pleasing than those of the Law; among the sayings of the Law, some are important and others of slight account; all those of the Scribes are important" (Jerus. Talmud, Berakhoth, f. 3, 2).<sup>17</sup>

Now, in the Sermon on the Mount Christ did not oppose the law itself. He made this plain. "Do not think that I have come to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I have not come to destroy, but to fulfill. For amen I say to you, till heaven and earth pass away, not one jot or one tittle shall be lost from the Law till all things have been accomplished" (Matt. v. 17, 18). It was not the Law itself that Christ opposed, but rather the spirit in which the Pharisees expounded the Law, and the traditional accretions which embodied that spirit.<sup>18</sup> Christ maintained that the Law was to be interpreted in the spirit of Him Who made the Law. It was to be interpreted in the spirit of the prophets, who had emphasized that

<sup>16</sup> *Op. cit.*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 5.

<sup>17</sup> *The Life of Christ*, I, 179. An example of a rabbinic tradition perverting the Law is found in St. Matthew's Gospel. In this instance the commandment which prescribed respect for one's parents was nullified by an interpretation of the rabbis. The procedure was for a son to dedicate to God the things he should have used for the support of his parents. Christ severely censured this perversion of the Law. He said to the Scribes and Pharisees: "Why do you too transgress the commandment of God because of your tradition? For God said, 'Honor thy father and thy mother'; and, 'Let him who curses father or mother be put to death.' But you say, 'Whoever shall say to his father or mother, 'Any support thou mightest have had for me is dedicated to God,' does not have to honor his father or his mother.' So you have made void the commandment of God by your tradition" (Matt. xv. 3-6).

<sup>18</sup> "Jésus repousse cette 'tradition des hommes,' il se détourne de cette plante que Dieu n'a point plantée." *L'enseignement de Jésus*, Batiffol, p. 57.

love and obedience are dearer to God than all observances. The essential error of the Pharisees was that they failed to make the love of God, which was the first principle of the Law, the animating principle of the interpretation of the Law.<sup>19</sup> The Law, especially in Deuteronomy, contained burning exhortations to know and love God. This love of God, Christ recalled, was to be the fundamental norm in the interpretation of the Law and the guiding principle in determining man's proper relationship with God and with his neighbor.<sup>20</sup>

<sup>19</sup> After quoting Matt. xxii. 34-40 and Mark xii. 28-34, Batiffol says: "Oui, dit-il, un commandement est le plus grand, parce que ce commandement implique tous les autres, et ce commandement est celui qui prescrit l'amour du Seigneur et l'amour du prochain. Toute la loi est ramenée à ce devoir essentiel. . . . Le principe est posé qui fait l'unité des affirmations de Jésus,—qui lui permet de dire: 'Je ne suis pas venu abolir la loi ou les prophètes,' et en même temps: 'La loi et les prophètes jusqu'à Jean, depuis lors le royaume de Dieu est annoncé' (Luc. xvi. 16),—qui lui permet de repousser des épaules de ses disciples 'les fardeaux insupportables' dont les docteurs de la loi veulent charger les hommes (Luc. xi. 46), et de dire: 'Venez à moi. . . .' (Matt. xi. 28-30). . . . L'Évangile 'accomplit' la loi, non plus dans sa lettre, mais dans son esprit: il veut qu'on garde à la loi une fidélité qui ne soit point matérielle." *Op. cit.*, pp. 58-61, 70.

<sup>20</sup> Naturally, in the course of time additions had to be made to the Mosaic Law, since, as Fillion says: "Under the direct inspiration of God, Moses had set down, in broad lines, the principles that were to direct the social, moral, and religious conduct of the Israelites; but, with certain exceptions, he did not enter into details." *Op. cit.*, I, 177. New legislation was needed to apply the principles of the Law to changing conditions. However, these interpretations and applications were not on a par with the Law itself. "Chez les Juifs personne n'avait un pouvoir législative comparable à celui de Moïse. Il y avait donc une situation fautive pour les docteurs, s'efforçant vainement de mettre leurs déductions plus ou moins justes sur le même rang que le texte lui-même." Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 274.

Again, to be faithful even in little things is a sign of perfection. But there is a hierarchy of values in the moral order, and basic principles are not to be subordinated to secondary prescriptions. This hierarchy was not properly regarded by the Pharisees. As Fillion says, in reference to the Talmud, which represents the teaching of the Pharisees: "Whether it be a question of a vital prescription of first rank or one of those trifles or subtleties that fill the pages of the Talmud, strict and rigid punctuality was represented as being the essential, so that frequently the principal vanished before the accessory." *Op. cit.*, I, 180.

How did the Pharisees react to this teaching of Christ? They rejected it completely. They were convinced that they alone were the proper religious leaders and teachers of the people. They were jealous of their authority. No one had the right to oppose them. They alone knew the Law. All others were to listen to them. It was unthinkable that anyone should tell them what the Law was or how it was to be interpreted.<sup>21</sup> They never doubted that their interpretation of the Law was the correct one. The teaching of Christ, therefore, was wrong. They regarded Christ as being opposed to the Mosaic Law. Notice, for example, how they put their question on the occasion when they accused the woman taken in adultery: "Master, this woman has just now been caught in adultery. And in the Law Moses commanded us to stone such persons. What, therefore, dost thou say?" (John viii. 4, 5).

The opposition between Christ and the Pharisees in regard to the interpretation of the Law, and the fundamental difference in their moral and religious outlook is plainly revealed in their conflict over the observance of the Sabbath. The Pharisees accused Christ, first, of violating the law of the Sabbath Himself. Thus, He did not hesitate to heal the paralytic on the Sabbath; and it was on the Sabbath that He cured the man with the withered hand. Further, the Pharisees charged Him with allowing others, and even encouraging them, to violate the Sabbath law. He said nothing to His disciples when they plucked and rubbed away the chaff from the ears of wheat on the Sabbath; and He told the man born blind to go and wash in the pool, although it was the Sabbath. In the opinion of the Pharisees all these instances were violations of the law.<sup>22</sup> But Christ did not think so. On the occasion when He cured

<sup>21</sup> See the complementary note B, The Exclusivism of the Pharisees, at the end of this chapter.

<sup>22</sup> "Again and again we find them in conflict with our Lord on this point, for they will not even tolerate that He perform His miraculous cures on that day (Matt. xii. 1-8, 9-14; John v. 9-18; ix. 14-16; etc.). As may be seen throughout the tractate 'Shabbath' ('Sabbath') of the Talmud, the casuistry of the Rabbis was employed in this direction with a prodigality of detail that does more honor to their imagination than to their understanding of the law and its true spirit." Fillion, *op. cit.*, I, 188.

the man with the withered hand and also when He healed the paralytic at the pool He showed that there was no violation of the law at all. There is a hierarchy of precepts in the moral law. And the Mosaic Law recognized this hierarchy. The precept of charity is primary and fundamental. Charity takes precedence over all other laws. Charity is really the essential part of the law. It is the reason why the Law is to last forever. Because the law of charity is supreme, all other laws, including the precept of the Sabbath, must yield at times to the superior rights of charity.

The moral outlook of the Pharisees—and especially their failure to appreciate the importance of the law of charity—was an immense obstacle to their acceptance of Christ's teaching about the kingdom.<sup>23</sup> The kingdom of God can well be defined as the reign of the love of God in the soul. A misconception, therefore, about the importance of this law of charity is a direct obstacle to the understanding and acceptance of the kingdom. This identification, it is to be noticed, of the observance of the law of charity and membership in the kingdom is clearly expressed by our Lord Himself. On one occasion a Scribe asked our Lord which is the greatest commandment. Christ answered that the first commandment is to love God and to love one's neighbor as oneself. The rabbi replied: "Well answered, Master, thou hast said truly . . . that he should be loved with the whole heart, and with the whole understanding, and with the whole soul, and with one's whole strength; and that to love one's neighbor as oneself is a greater thing than all holocausts

<sup>23</sup> In reference to the obstacles that Christ encountered in His teaching about the kingdom of God Swete says: "Other hindrances stood in the way of the Kingdom of God, and they were met with equal determination. Foremost among these was Pharisaic Judaism, with its insistence on external duties and its neglect of 'the weightier matters of the Law.' The resistance offered to the Gospel by this system is seen in the Marcan tradition in connection with three questions: the question of weekly fasting, the question of the Sabbath, and the question of using certain forms of ceremonial purification. The first and the third of these observances rested simply upon the tradition of the Rabbis, and our Lord declined to be bound by them in any way; the second, which was required by the Torah, He accepted, but lifted it up to a level high above that which it occupied in the teaching of the Scribes." *Studies in the Teaching of our Lord*, p. 44.

and sacrifices." Christ then commended the scribe, and He chose to express His commendation in terms of the kingdom of God: "Thou art not far from the kingdom of God."<sup>24</sup>

The Pharisees, then, by their lack of appreciation of the fundamental law of charity set up an obstacle to their acceptance of Christ's teaching about the kingdom. They were therefore laboring under a double difficulty. Not only did they expect a political, materialistic, and nationalistic kingdom; but their basic moral and religious ideas were opposed to the acceptance of the true teaching about the kingdom.<sup>25</sup>

The hostility of the Pharisees against Christ became more intense when they realized that He was claiming to be divine. There was no place in their expectations for a divine Messiah.<sup>26</sup> And yet they could not fail to recognize Christ's claims to be God. For example, there was the miracle of the curing of the paralytic. When the sick man was first brought to Christ, our Lord pronounced him healed of his sins. The Pharisees immediately began to murmur: "Why does this man speak thus? He blasphemeth. Who can forgive sins, but God only?" (Mark ii. 7). But Christ did not deny the inference that the Pharisees had drawn from His words. Rather did He proceed to cure the visible and physical malady of the man to prove that He possessed divine power. "'Which is easier, to say to the paralytic, 'Thy sins are forgiven thee,' or to say, 'Arise, and take up thy pallet, and walk'? But that you may know that the Son of Man has power on earth to forgive sins'—he said to the paralytic, 'I say to thee, arise, and take up thy pallet, and go to thy house'" (Mark ii. 9-11). On another occasion Christ was conversing with the Pharisees. They were speaking about Abraham, the great Jewish patriarch. The name of Abraham, of course, was of great Messianic significance. The Messianic hopes of the Jews had

<sup>24</sup> Cf. Mark xii. 28-34.

<sup>25</sup> "There were the Pharisees, with their blind traditional interpretations of the law, their hatred of everything Gentile—they could not accept Christ, because he encouraged the Gentiles, and ate with publicans and sinners." Knox, *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, p. 80.

<sup>26</sup> Cf. the complementary note C at the end of this chapter: Jewish Messianic Expectations and the Divinity of the Messias.

really begun with the promises made to Abraham. In the course of the conversation, therefore, Christ showed that Abraham had placed all his hopes in the Messias. Our Lord went on to accuse the Pharisees of not being true children of Abraham and of not being true sons of God Himself. When the Pharisees remonstrated, Christ said very plainly: "Amen, amen, I say to you, before Abraham came to be, I am" (John viii. 58). There could be no misunderstanding of Christ's meaning. He was affirming His pre-existence; and that was equivalent to saying that He was God. The Pharisees, therefore, had to make a choice—either believe in Him and worship Him along with the Father or stone Him as a blasphemer. The Gospel reveals their decision. "They therefore took up stones to cast at him; but Jesus hid himself, and went out from the temple" (John viii. 59).

The Pharisees, we have now seen, were the real religious leaders at the time of Christ. Nevertheless, they shared the false Messianic hopes of the people. They were looking not for a spiritual Savior, but for a political and national Deliverer.<sup>27</sup> In addition, they entertained basic moral concepts that were opposed to the acceptance of Christ's teaching on the kingdom. Consequently, Christ's only chance of having His teaching accepted by the Pharisees was to present a gradual revelation. Only gradually, Christ decided, would He reveal the true nature of the kingdom and His own true nature and work as the Messias. He presented Himself first as a religious teacher and reformer—emphasizing true, interior spirituality, and basing the whole moral law on the fundamental principle of the love

<sup>27</sup> Joseph Klausner makes this admission: "L'idée messianique a pour point de départ une visée politique, à savoir le désir ardent de retrouver la puissance politique perdue et de voir rétablie la légitime royauté davidique; elle devait donc nécessairement, malgré tous les efforts tentés pour la spiritualiser et pour en accentuer le caractère moral, demeurer essentiellement terrestre et politique. Le royaume messianique est à proprement parler le royaume de David, mais étendu au loin, purifié moralement et doté de toutes les splendeurs du monde, pour autant que l'imagination orientale pouvait l'imaginer sans que fût effacé son caractère terrestre et politique. Car le royaume du Messie juif est et reste, du moins si l'on considère l'époque des Tannaïtes, un royaume de ce monde." Quoted from Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme . . .," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 149. The quotation is from Klausner's *Die messianischen Vorstellungen*, p. 119.

of God and neighbor. At first, also, He referred to Himself only indirectly and obscurely as the Messiah.<sup>28</sup> Only later would He present the complete and clear teaching about the kingdom of God and His own Messiahship.<sup>29</sup>

We have now considered briefly the relationship between Christ and the three groups who comprised His listeners, that is, the people, the disciples, and the religious leaders of the Jewish nation. In each case, we have seen, false Messianic ideas constituted a tremendous obstacle to the acceptance of Christ's message. The Jewish nation at that time was expecting a kingdom that would be primarily earthly, and a Messiah who would be primarily a worldly king. They were looking for grandeur, splendor, power, victory—all primarily external and material.<sup>30</sup> The only way that Christ could hope to supplant these erroneous ideas was to present the true concept of the kingdom and of the Messiah in a gradual revelation. In this gradual revelation there were various elements. We have indicated several of them. In the preceding chapter we attempted to show how the kingdom parables represented a large element in this wise and merciful plan of Christ.

<sup>28</sup> Recall, for example, the occasion on which Christ said to the Pharisees: "I am the light of the world. He who follows me does not walk in the darkness, but will have the light of life" (John viii. 12). The Pharisees were well versed in Scripture. They knew that the prophets had foretold that the Messiah would be the light of the Gentiles (Isaiah xlii. 6; xlix. 6; etc.). They could not help, therefore, but conclude that Christ was referring to Himself as the promised Messiah.

<sup>29</sup> See the complementary note D at the end of this chapter for a brief discussion of Christ's progressive revelation as found in St. John's Gospel.

<sup>30</sup> See note E at the end of this chapter for a consideration of the difficulty caused by Old Testament texts that speak of the kingdom of God in terms of material splendor.

## COMPLEMENTARY NOTES TO CHAPTER IV

## NOTE A: THE MESSIANIC TITLE, SON OF MAN.

Christ's plan to reveal His Messiahship only gradually is clearly indicated in the Gospels. For example, immediately after St. Peter had made his profession of faith in Christ at Caesarea Philippi our Lord commanded the Apostles not to tell anyone that He was the Messiah. "Then he strictly charged his disciples to tell no one that he was Jesus the Christ" (Matt. xvi. 20).

It was in accordance with this reserve that Christ chose the title, Son of Man, and avoided using the titles, Messiah or Son of David. As Felder says, in reference to the title, Son of Man: "This name did not have the national and political significance which the other Messianic titles had by degrees acquired, such as 'Christ' (Messiah, the Anointed), 'Son of David,' 'Prince of Peace' and 'King of Israel.' For that very reason, also, it did not excite, as the others did, national hopes and passions. It was thus best adapted to become representative of the Messianic views of Jesus, and a token of His silent, gradual revelation of Himself." (*Christ and the Critics*, I, 135.)

Son of Man was really a Messianic title. It possessed Messianic significance from the time of Daniel. As Lagrange says, in interpreting the text of Daniel vii. 13-18: "... le Fils de l'homme de Daniel est bien un symbole du règne de Dieu; mais ainsi que chacune des bêtes représentait le chef d'un grand empire, le Fils de l'homme représente le chef du royaume de Dieu." (*Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 383.) Charue: "Ainsi donc, le fils d'homme est bien le Messie personnel dans la vision de Daniel, mais dans le contexte où les animaux symbolisent les royaumes païens, ce Messie lui-même symbolise, à sa façon, toute l'assemblée des saints dont il est la tête et le chef." (*L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, pp. 43, 44.) See also: Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933 (14), p. 278; Felder, *op. cit.*, I, 135.

Although the title, Son of Man, was therefore really Messianic, it had another significance, a significance that was not at all Messianic. Thus, Felder says: "In the Aramaic mother-tongue of Jesus, 'Son of Man' meant certainly merely a man." (*Op. cit.*, I, 135.) Lagrange: "... Fils de l'homme, qui à l'origine signifiait seulement un homme, fils de l'homme et de la femme, ..." (*Op. cit.*, p. 248.) Actually, at the time of Christ, the Jewish people had not concluded from the text of Daniel that Son of Man was a Messianic title. As Charue says: "Toutefois, l'appellation *fils d'homme* ne devait pas constituer un titre messianique courant." (*Op. cit.*, p. 45.) Cf. also Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, II, p. 29.

The fact that the term, Son of Man, actually had a double significance served the purposes of Christ admirably. The term would not arouse the false Messianic hopes of the people. And yet it was Messianic. Christ therefore could use the term and gradually reveal its true Messianic significance and His own real Messianic office. "As His activity progressed He concentrated into

this title . . . an ever-greater amount of dignity, character, deeds of benevolence, rights and the vocation of the teaching, working, suffering and glorified Messiah." (Felder, *op. cit.*, pp. 135, 136.)

The Gospels show that the people never came to realize that Christ was referring to Himself as the Messiah in His use of this term. This fact, however, should hardly be an occasion of surprise. "If those who witnessed the three years' apostolate did not observe that He inaugurated and founded the kingdom of God, it need not surprise us to find that they did not understand the title Son of Man." (Rose, *Studies on the Gospels*, p. 172.)

Buzy compares the use of this title, Son of Man, and the use of the parables as elements in Christ's program of gradual revelation. "Il semble, en effet, que les paraboles jouent, par rapport au Royaume, une partie de l'office que remplissait le vocable de Fils de l'Homme vis-à-vis du concept de Messie. Devant transmuier le concept populaire du Messie au concept véritable, et ne pouvant opérer ce changement au grand jour, Jésus chercha un moyen terme sous le couvert duquel il pût réaliser son programme. Ce terme fut le Fils de l'Homme. Protégé par ce vocable, le Maître put lancer ses idées, sans provoquer d'effervescence exagérée; il put se faire pressentir et se manifester sans prononcer le nom redoutable." (*Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 382.)

#### NOTE B: THE EXCLUSIVISM OF THE PHARISEES.

Josephus speaks of the "sect of the Pharisees, who have the reputation of being unrivalled experts in their country's law." (*The Life*, No. 38.) The term here translated "country's laws" really means "the traditional rules which grew up around the Law." (Cf. the Loeb edition, p. 73, note.) Lagrange defines the sect of the Pharisees as "une association qui se flattait de connaître plus exactement que quiconque la loi de Dieu, dans son texte et dans sa tradition, organisée pour pratiquer plus ponctuellement, et pour l'imposer aux autres." (*Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 272.)

Schürer observes that in the opinion of the Pharisees only those belonged to the true congregation of Israel who strictly observed the Law and all the traditions. Continuing, he says: "All besides are Am-ha-arez (the people dwelling in the land), and therefore do not belong to the true congregation of Israel. Consequently, Pharisaism estimates itself as very specially the *ecclesiola in ecclesia*. Only the circle of the Pharisaic association represents the true Israel, who perfectly observe the law and have therefore a claim to the promises." (*A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Jesus Christ*, Div. II, Vol. II, p. 23.) (Cf. also Lagrange, *op. cit.*, p. 276.)

Commenting on the Gospels, Batiffol says: "Le judaïsme, en effet, tel qu'il est conçu par l'orthodoxie hiérosolymite, est essentiellement la science de la loi et l'observation de la loi. Le 'Nomisme' crée une aristocratie, celle des Juifs qui sont doctes dans la loi et qui en sont les observateurs scrupuleux. Les pharisiens de Jérusalem, en saint Jean (VII, 45-52), expriment le sentiment qu'ils

ont de leur aristocratie lorsqu'ils disent: 'Y a-t-il quelqu'un parmi les princes du peuple qui ait cru en Jésus? Y en a-t-il parmi les pharisiens? Mais cette populace qui ne connaît pas la loi, ce sont des maudits! ' . . . Israel apparaît ainsi partagé en deux classes, celle des justes et celle des pécheurs, celle qui connaît la loi et celle qui ne la connaît pas," (*L'enseignement de Jésus*, p. 45.) Cf. also Swete, *Studies in the Teaching of Our Lord*, pp. 29, 30. After saying of Christ that "There is in His public teaching no trace of contempt for the 'am ha'arets,'" Swete notes: "Contrast John vii. 49, and Hillel's caustic saying in *Aboth* ii. 6, ed. Taylor: 'He used to say, "No boor is a sin-fearer, nor is the vulgar pious."'"

#### NOTE C: JEWISH MESSIANIC EXPECTATIONS AND THE DIVINITY OF THE MESSIAS.

Referring to the opinion of Christ's contemporaries about the expected Messiah, Fillion says "Those who believed in His divinity, following certain indications of the prophets, were very few in number." (*The Life of Christ*, I, 199.) Now, the question we are to consider here is whether the Jewish people had reason to expect a divine Messiah. In other words, had the Old Testament foretold plainly enough that the Messiah would be divine?

We have already mentioned (ch. 2) Old Testament texts that taught very clearly that the Messiah would be of human nature and of human origin. But the Old Testament had also foretold that the Messiah would be divine in nature. For our purposes, it will suffice to recall several of these Old Testament texts.

Isaiah had foretold (7:14) the extraordinary origin of a child named "Emmanuel," which means "God with us." (Cf. Frey, "Le conflit entre le Messianisme. . .," *BI*, 1933, p. 288.) The same prophet referred to the Messiah in these terms: " . . . His name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, God the Mighty, the Father of the world to come, the Prince of Peace" (9:6). The term used here, God the Mighty, is rendered "God-hero" by Lagrange; but he explains: "Isaiah had predicted in so many words that a remnant of Jacob should return to the 'God-hero' (10:21). Now there never was any question of Israel being converted to any other than God." (*The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, II, 332.) Kissane prefers the translation "Divine-hero," and he maintains that "It does not mean that the person is divine. . . ." (*The Book of Isaiah*, I, 112.) McClellan unhesitatingly rejects this opinion of Kissane. He notes first that the rendering "a god of a hero, godlike hero" "is now upheld by a single Catholic commentator, Dr. Edward J. Kissane. . . ." McClellan then quotes Fischer with approval: "Der 'starke Gott' ist Jahve, während 9,5 der Messiah 'starker Gott' zubenannt und damit seine Verbundenheit mit dem Gottwesen ausgesprochen wird." ("El Gibbor," *CBQ*, 1944, p. 286.)

In reference to this same term, Tobac says: "Jahvé est souvent appelé *El gibbôr*, Dieu-fort, mais ici cet attribut est transféré au Messie: dans cet enfant réside le plénitude des forces divins. Cet attribut s'est vérifié dans le Messie Dieu-homme, d'une façon profonde et complète que ne pouvaient soupçonner les juifs." ("Isaïe," *DTC*, VIII, col. 64.) Tobac quotes the interpretation of

the Targum of Jonathan: "Il sera appelé par l'Admirable en ses conseils, par le Dieu fort qui subsiste éternellement: Messie sous qui nous jouirons d'une grande paix." (*Art. cit.*, col. 62.) Kirkpatrick likewise says: "*Mighty God* expresses His divine greatness and power, as the unique representative of Jehovah, who is Himself *the mighty God* (x. 21)." (*The Doctrine of the Prophets*, p. 193.)

Our Lord Himself referred to the implications of Psalm 109 (110): 1, which reads: "The Lord said to my Lord. . . ." Christ said: "If David therefore calls him 'Lord,' how is he his son?" (Matt. xxii. 44, 45.) Cf. Frey, *art. cit.*, p. 288.

Concerning the term, Son of Man, in Daniel (7:13-18), Lagrange comments: " . . . le Fils d'homme représente le chef du royaume de Dieu. . . . Lui vient du ciel, porté sur les nuages, à la façon de Dieu (Ex. 19:9, etc.), et il a sa place à côté de l'Ancien des jours, comme un jeune Dieu auprès de son Père." (*Le judaïsme . . .*, p. 383.) In reference to the same text Frey says, after stating that the text indicates the humanity of the Son of Man: "Mais sa divinité ne l'est pas moins: venir sur les nuées du ciel pour prendre place à côté du Très-Haut et recevoir l'investiture d'une royauté qui n'a de limites ni dans le temps ni dans l'espace, ne peut être que d'un Dieu." ("Le conflit entre le Messianisme. . .," *BI*, 1933, p. 288.)

The Old Testament, then, had given indications that the Messiah would be divine. Lagrange, therefore, seems justified in blaming the Jewish people for not keeping both the human and the divine characterizations of the Messiah as found in Scripture. He says: " . . . ce qu'on eût dû attendre d'une société religieuse fidèle, c'est qu'elle conservât du moins chacun de ses aspects dans son intégrité, tout en se conformant au progrès de la révélation dans le sens spirituel. Ce ne fut pas le cas." (*Le judaïsme . . .*, p. 384.)

Frey admits that these texts did not give the Jews perfectly clear and lucid testimony of the divinity of the Messiah. But he rightly insists that the texts were sufficient to give the Jewish people reason to reflect and to examine thoroughly the declarations of Christ concerning His divinity. Referring to Is. vii. 14-16; ix. 5 ff.; Psalm 109 (110):2, and Micheas v. 1, he says: "Sans doute, ces affirmations, ainsi que l'enseignement des Saints Livres sur la Sagesse, dont la portée est aujourd'hui très claire, se présentaient aux Juifs sous une lumière plus estompée. Mais ces textes étaient des pierres d'attente qui auraient dû, à tout le moins, les inviter à la réflexion et leur faire examiner avec la plus grande attention les déclarations de Jésus sur sa divinité." ("Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933, p. 288.)

On the other hand, it must be remembered that there were serious obstacles to the Jews' accepting Christ as divine. There was, first, the tenacity with which they held to the doctrine of the unity of God. "Les Juifs ne voulaient voir dans le Messie qu'un simple homme, et ils considéraient l'enseignement de Jésus sur sa divinité comme une insupportable atteinte au dogme

monothéiste." (Frey, "Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933, pp. 287, 288.) Cf. also Lagrange, *Le judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, p. 342.

Added to this difficulty was the Jews' exaggerated notion of the transcendence of God. Of the teaching of the Apocalypses on this point Lagrange says: "On dit volontiers que le Dieu de l'apocalypse est plus transcendant . . . il est moins à la portée de la prière. On a essayé de la rendre plus imposant et plus sublime, et pour cela on n'a trouvé rien de mieux que de le placer très loin et très haut. Il ne convient plus à sa Majesté de venir converser parmi les hommes; quand on veut le trouver, il faut faire un long voyage. Encore le plus souvent ne daigne-t-il pas parler lui-même, ou par un ange qui parle en son nom: il a ordinairement un interprète qui n'est qu'un de ses ministres." (*Le judaïsme* . . . , pp. 84, 85.)

Referring to the Jews' belief in both these doctrines, i. e., the unity and the transcendence of God, Lagrange says again: "With the strength of its deep conviction concerning the unity of God and His infinite greatness, the Jewish mind rebels against the dogma of the Incarnation. The protests of the Pharisees, the sense of outrage they showed at hearing what seemed to them a blasphemy, and the action they took to punish such a blasphemy, are to this day their chief title to honor in the eyes of modern Jews." (*The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, II, 163.)

#### NOTE D: GRADUAL MESSIANIC REVELATION IN THE FOURTH GOSPEL.

Sometimes it is said that the Gospel of St. John does not indicate a gradual revelation in the teaching of our Lord. In the fourth Gospel, it is said, Christ proclaims clearly and from the very beginning of His ministry that He is the Messias.

First of all, the difference between the Synoptic Gospels and the Gospel of St. John on this point is not to be exaggerated. As Buzy-Barton remark, in reference to Christ's gradual revelation: "It may be remarked that the difference between the doctrine of the synoptists and that of the fourth gospel is not as great as it might appear to be at first sight." (*The Life of St. John the Baptist*, p. 124.)

Swete testifies to Christ's gradual revelation in the fourth Gospel: "In His self-revelation our Lord manifests some measure of the same reserve which we have noticed in the Synoptic Gospels. Though at Jerusalem men were freely discussing the possibility that Jesus was the Christ, the Lord appears not to have expressly claimed the title, even if His words implied that it belonged to Him . . . John x. 24 f.: . . . , cf. viii. 25. The only express statement seems to have been made to the Samaritan woman (iv. 26)." (*Studies in the Teaching of our Lord*, pp. 131, 132.) Grandmaison likewise points out that Christ, even according to the fourth Gospel, pursued a program of gradual revelation. After discussing Christ's progressive revelation according to the Synoptists, he continues: "Such was the economy of the manifestation of Jesus as it can be reconstructed from the indications in the Synoptic Gospels—and some of these

are decisive. Far from contradicting it, the fourth Gospel adds reasons for believing it exactly. Thus, the abandonment by several disciples (vi. 66); the unbelief of the 'brethren of the Lord,' or some of them, and their impatience of the reticence and slowness of the Saviour (vii. 3 sqq.); the prolonged uncertainty of the crowds (x. 24); the refusal even to the direct questions of the Pharisees (viii. 53 sqq.; x. 24-40, etc.), all are noted and stressed by St. John. The progress of the apostles' faith in the mission of their Master is brought out in equally high relief. . . . Through the course of the last instructions (xiv. 10 to xvi. 30), and until after Christ's resurrection (ii. 22), their progress in faith is expressly mentioned. It is useless, then, to set the Johannine teaching in opposition to the Synoptic on this point. If 'economy' is more visible in the latter, it is very easily recognizable also in *John*; and in both it is plain that it was chiefly an attempt to delay the great and final claim, while preparing it, adapting it, and making it inevitable once its true meaning was restored." (*Jesus Christ*, II, 44.)

To indicate further wherein the fourth Gospel gives evidence of Christ's gradual revelation and to point out why this evidence is not stronger, we may add the following observations:

(1) In St. John's Gospel, even at a fairly late stage in the ministry of Christ, we find the Jews gathered around Him and asking Him: "How long dost Thou keep us in suspense? If Thou art the Christ, tell us openly" (John x. 24). He has not yet told them plainly that He is the Messiah, though He has said enough for men of good will to infer as much from His words. Again, the account of Christ's trial in St. John's Gospel (18:19 ff.) shows that the Pharisees could bring no clear charge of blasphemy against Him.

(2) The greater part of St. John's Gospel deals with events which belong to a late period of Christ's ministry. With chapter seven the history of the last six months is already begun. Now, from the Synoptic account of this period we know that our Lord had by then begun partly to uncover mysteries which He had hitherto kept closely secret.

(3) The fourth Gospel deals principally with the ministry of our Lord in Jerusalem. Jerusalem was the center of Jewish theological learning, a fanatical religious center, the headquarters of those Jewish leaders who were bent on discrediting and destroying our Lord. There the challenge would be pressed home against Him and He would be forced to assert His claims even more plainly and dogmatically than He would have preferred.

(4) It is true that there are instances where our Lord is proclaimed to be the Messiah even in the early days of His ministry. "But there are also the clearest indications that this came about, not by His own provocation, but as a quite spontaneous movement, and that our Lord's behaviour was to restrain these outbursts; they were of little value to Him until the motives behind them should have been spiritualized. (See i. 41, 49; iv. 29; vi. 14; vii. 26; vii. 31, 41; x. 24)." (Kehoe, "The Gospel of St. John," *New Testament*, p. 148.)

(5) St. John, as also the other Evangelists, has a special purpose in writing

his Gospel. He tells us that the purpose is "... that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that believing you may have life in his name" (John xx. 31). Furthermore, in carrying out this purpose of emphasizing the divinity of Christ, John does not confine himself to the testimony he possesses as a purely historical witness (John xix. 35); he also imparts the knowledge he has received from revelation (John xiv. 26). John's purpose in writing his Gospel and the character of his testimony are expressed very clearly in this statement of Trépanier: "Il a eu de Jésus une connaissance à la fois expérimentale et révélée, une connaissance de foi basée sur celle de son expérience humaine. Il a de la divinité de Jésus une notion qui lui a été fondamentalement fournie par les sens mais que la Révélation divine est venue subséquemment préciser. Cette connaissance à la fois naturelle et surnaturelle, il veut la communiquer aux autres en précisant son divin objet. Elle est conforme à celle qu'ont de Jésus les évangélistes antérieurs mais plus explicite sur la vie divine de Jésus." ("Contribution à une recherche de l'idée de témoin dans les écrits johanniques," *Revue de l'Université d'Ottawa*, 1945 [33], p. 33\*. Trépanier refers here to de Grandmaison, *Jésus Christ*, II, 46.) Therefore, in view of St. John's purpose in writing his Gospel and of the character of his testimony, we must expect to find more frequent and clearer and even earlier evidence of Christ's Messiahship and of His divinity in the fourth Gospel than in the Synoptic Gospels.

#### NOTE E: MATERIALISTIC MESSIANISM IN THE OLD TESTAMENT.

In some texts of the Old Testament the Messianic kingdom is described in terms of material and worldly splendor. Such texts obviously present a difficulty. If Christ's kingdom was primarily spiritual, why was it sometimes described in the Old Testament in terms of earthly power and glory?

In the interpretation of these Old Testament passages authors refer to the following two principles, which of course, are not exclusive of one another but rather complementary: (1) imagery and symbolism, and (2) conditional prophecy.

(1) Referring to these particular Old Testament texts, Frey says: "Mais, dans ce genre de descriptions, il faut tout d'abord faire la part de l'hyperbole, du style poétique, des conventions de langage. . . . Aux figures de langage il faut ajouter les symbolismes qui signifient des réalités spirituelles sous des expressions matérielles." ("Le conflit entre le Messianisme de Jésus et le Messianisme des Juifs de son temps," *BI*, 1933, pp. 284, 285.) Maas, "It is in great part owing to the neglect of the prophetic types and symbols that the Jews did not recognize in Jesus the Messiah. Without considering that the kingdom of David is only a type of the Messianic kingdom, they expected a literal fulfillment in the person of the Messiah of all that had been said concerning his royal dignity. . . . What has been said about the interpretation of the typical and the symbolical sense of the prophetic predictions applies in a measure also to the figurative or the metaphorical sense. Since the style of

the prophets is to some extent poetical, as has been seen above, in the interpretation allowance must be made for figures of speech and poetic ornament of language." (*Christ in Type and Prophecy*, I, 157-159.) Cf. also Fillion, *The Life of Christ*, I, 198; Buzy-Barton, *The Life of St. John the Baptist*, p. 125; Knox, *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, 36; Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, 407.

Felder refers to the complete picture presented in the Messianic prophecies: "Although these promises appear, for the most part, in the garb of highly coloured temporal power and splendour, yet they were evidently intended to be merely, or at least chiefly, the figurative shell and external form of the spiritual blessings and benefits of the Messianic age. Even in those passages of the Old Testament in which the Messianic ideals assume the most intense national and material colours, the Son of David still always appears as a worker of miracles, a priest and teacher of truth and righteousness, equipped with the choicest spiritual gifts of God, and sent for the salvation and prosperity of all nations." (*Christ and the Critics*, I, 182.) Cf. also Gigot, *Outlines of Jewish History*, 288.

Lagrange attributes the mistake to the slavishly literal interpretation of the rabbis: "Ainsi le docteur est-il toujours le scribe attaché à la lettre . . . il en est l'esclave: disposition d'esprit aussi incompatible avec une exégèse historique littérale qu'avec une exégèse spirituelle comme celle des Apôtres et des premiers Pères qui allaient à l'enseignement religieux sans trop s'arrêter à des traits qu'ils prenaient résolument pour des symboles. L'acharnement des rabbins à exiger l'accomplissement littéral de tous les détails descriptifs de la période messianique, qu'ils ont encore exagérés jusqu'à l'absurde, est ce qui distingue le plus leur méthode de celle des Apôtres; c'est un des obstacles les plus sérieux qui les tiennent éloignés du christianisme." (*Le judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, 294.) (Cf. also the same author, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, II, 167, 332.)

(2) The second principle used by authors in the interpretation of these Old Testament texts is that of conditional prophecy. According to this principle some of the prophecies, including promises as well as threats, depended on the placing of certain conditions for their fulfillment.

In explanation of the principle itself, Gigot says: "The last characteristic of the predictions of the prophets to be noticed here is their conditional fulfillment. Many predictions were of the nature of a promise or a threat with regard to persons or cities and countries, as we find it stated in Jeremiah xviii. 7-10 and Ezechiel xxxiii. 13-16. This is, of course, in perfect harmony with the moral government of a just and holy God, and should be distinctly borne in mind because it explains why many predictions have been unfulfilled, and from the nature of the case will never be fulfilled: the actual retribution of the predicted evil or good things was dependent on the continuance of the same moral attitude of the people concerned, and as this moral attitude was

actually changed, the promised reward or denounced punishment were necessarily withheld" (*Outlines of Jewish History*, p. 291).

In direct reference to the Messianic prophecies we are considering Felder says: "It is likewise clearly said in the prophetic announcements that in this kingdom the *earthly and political aspirations* of the people of the revelation also have their part. It does not at all appear that the prophecies on this subject are to be interpreted wholly and exclusively in a spiritual and religious sense. Rather is it to be supposed that Israel, provided it had not rejected the Messiah, would have inherited that temporal and national blessing which from time immemorial had been the reward for its fidelity to Jehovah, and which was promised no less for the Messianic period than as an accompaniment of the *spiritual and religious blessings of the Messianic kingdom*" (*Christ and the Critics*, 153, 154).

Frey likewise says: "Avec le même Docteur (St. Bellarmine), il faut ajouter que les promesses politiques et temporelles, faites à David et à sa dynastie, étaient subordonnées à la fidélité de ces princes à la loi de Dieu; elles ne se sont pas réalisées par leur faute. Seule la promesse du règne éternel d'un des fils de David, du Messie, était absolue" ("Le conflit . . .," *BI*, 1933, p. 285). Cf. also Barton, "The Religion of the Hebrew Prophets," *SCR*, Vol. III, No. 18, p. 30; Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, II, 141.

(For an explanation of the principle of conditional prophecy and its application to many of the prophecies of Isaias, cf. J. Fischer, *Das Buch Isaias*, Vol. I, pp. 38, 108, 116; Vol. II, pp. 59, 94, and especially pp. 99, 100. For the application of the principle to the prophecies in the second section of the book of Isaias, i. e., chapters 40 to 66, cf. Kirkpatrick, *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 408, 409.)

## CHAPTER V

### THE JUSTICE THEORY OF THE PARABLES

UP to this point in our discussion we have been describing the mercy theory of the kingdom parables. Now, there is a contrary opinion as to why our Lord used these particular parables. It is known as the justice or punishment theory. The justice theory maintains that the kingdom parables were a punishment—a just punishment meted out to the people for their previous rejection of Christ's teaching. Before Christ began to use the kingdom parables, this theory says, He had spoken to the people in plain and simple language. The people had been unresponsive and had rejected this simple teaching. They had refused to profit by Christ's instructions. In just punishment for this incredulity Christ then began to use the obscure kingdom parables. He continued to preach; but now His message was couched in obscure terms. Manganot clearly describes the theory in these words:

Par son incrédulité à la prédication claire de l'Évangile elle (la foule) avait attiré sur elle le châtiment divin. Dieu l'avait rejetée et réprouvée et pour exécuter ce jugement divin de réprobation, Jésus changea à dessein le mode de son enseignement et il a parlé obscurément en paraboles pour que la foule qui l'entendait ne put plus comprendre et se convertir. Le but de Jésus, en parlant en paraboles, était donc d'endurcir de plus en plus la foule qui le suivait, pour qu'entendant elle n'entende pas et qu'elle ne se convertisse pas.<sup>1</sup>

This justice theory of the parables is defended by a number of eminent Scripture scholars. Prominent among them are Maldonatus, Knabenbauer, and Fonck.<sup>2</sup> Maldonatus' expression of the opinion

<sup>1</sup> *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, p. 240.

<sup>2</sup> Maldonatus, Knabenbauer and Fonck are the outstanding defenders of the justice theory among modern scholars. See, e.g., the statement of Skrinjar; "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1930 (11), p. 434, note 1.

is classic. After presenting the interpretation of Mark iv. 33 according to the mercy theory, he says: "Sed non dubito . . . sensum esse omnino contrarium: ideo Christum hoc quidem loco parabolis usum fuisse, non ut auditores melius intelligerent, sed ut, qui credere nolebant diserte aperteque loquenti, loquentem per parabolas et obscure, etiam si maxime vellent, intelligere non possent."<sup>3</sup> Knabenbauer likewise says: "Cum itaque Christi doctrinam non susceperint eo quo oportuit modo, in poenam ulterior eis institutio subtrahitur. . . . Atque in poenam Christus ulteriorem atque explicitam doctrinam illis non tradit; sed veritatem illis proponit quasi velamine obtectam. Praevidet illos non esse intellecturos; nihilominus eo modo docet. Quare illorum hac in re caecitatem velle dicitur, quae simul est poena quam meruerunt."<sup>4</sup> Fonck also speaks very clearly:

Hence we can and, in fact, we must say that our Lord had a special object in these parables regarding the unbelieving people. . . . This object was: That the Jews might see the image and not recognize the truth: might hear the words and not understand their deeper import. The instruction on the mysteries, the true nature and the value of the new kingdom of the Messiah, was to remain disguised to them. . . .

Inasmuch as they had been deaf to the clear, plain admonition of their Messiah and, at most had only manifested barren admiration but not real amendment, so now, the understanding of the clear and undisguised Word of God concerning the kingdom of the Messiah was withheld from them. The grace of the instruction was withdrawn from them, and they had now to experience the punishment of their hardheartedness.<sup>5</sup>

From these quotations it is evident that the justice theory postulates a change in the teaching of our Lord. The theory holds that Christ at first spoke to the people in plain, simple language and then changed to a more obscure style. It must be noted immediately that this belief in a change in Christ's teaching is not in itself peculiar to the justice theory. Practically all authors, no matter what their view on the question of the purpose of the parables, hold that at a

<sup>3</sup> *Commentarii in Quatuor Evangelistas*, I, 725.

<sup>4</sup> *Evangelium Secundum Sanctum Marcum*, p. 117.

<sup>5</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, pp. 37, 39.

certain stage in the ministry of Christ His teaching became more obscure.<sup>6</sup> Thus, among modern writers who make explicit mention of such a change in Christ's teaching—besides Maldonatus, Knabenbauer, and Fonck, whom we have just quoted—are Lebreton, Mangelot, Fouard, Rose, Prat, Durand, Buzy, Goodier, Vosté, Plummer, and Morgan.<sup>7</sup> As we shall see presently, these authors hold all shades of opinion on the purpose of the parables. Furthermore, authors are generally agreed that Christ used the parable method in His teaching even before He began to use the kingdom parables.<sup>8</sup> There is general agreement, therefore, on this summary proposition—that there was a change in Christ's teaching and that this change consisted in the use of parables that were more developed and more obscure than the parables that our Lord previously used. As

<sup>6</sup> Charue denies that there was any real change in Christ's teaching. He says: "Il faut donc distinguer deux périodes dans le ministère de Jésus: une première pendant laquelle il prêcha à tous dans ce genre populaire qu'est la parabole, mais sans succès quand il abordait la doctrine du Royaume, à cause des préjugés qui empêchaient d'atteindre la vérité figurée; puis une seconde, pendant laquelle il se vit forcé d'instruire en particulier ses disciples de vérités inabordables devant le peuple, tandis qu'il restait en contact avec celui-ci par l'enseignement parabolique. Nous nous inscrivons donc en faux contre l'exégèse qui voit dans l'enseignement parabolique une innovation tardive, soit que Jésus l'eût employé à la suite de l'incrédulité coupable du peuple et parce qu'il aurait dû changer de méthode en face d'un changement d'attitude de la foule, soit qu'il l'eût adopté pour éviter des discussions doctrinales avec les Pharisiens mêlés à la multitude." *L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, pp. 132, 133.

Lagrange also seems to deny that there was any change in our Lord's teaching. See his statement in note 19 below.

<sup>7</sup> Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, I, 243, 245; Mangelot, *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, pp. 237, 242, 243; Fouard, *The Christ the Son of God*, I, 299 ff.; Rose, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, 35-37; Prat, "Nature et but des Paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 208; *Jésus Christ*, I, 319; Durand, "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), 757, 765; "Paraboles de l'Évangile," *DAFC*, Vol. III, col. 1573; Buzy, *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, 276, 352; Goodier, "The Parables," *New Testament*, 178; Vosté, *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 152; Plummer, "Parable (inNT)," *HDB*, III, p. 664; Morgan, *Parables and Metaphors of our Lord*, pp. 13, 14.

<sup>8</sup> See the references in the preceding note.

Morgan says: "There are two self-evident facts: first, that our Lord did use the parabolic method; and secondly, that at a certain stage in His ministry He employed it in a new way."<sup>9</sup>

While there is this general agreement among authors that Christ's teaching became more complex and obscure through the use of the kingdom parables, it is in assigning the reasons for this change that sharp opposition arises between the defenders of the two theories. The defenders of the mercy theory maintain that the obscurity was due entirely to the change in the content of Christ's teaching. The obscurity was due to the fact that Christ, in the kingdom parables, was presenting His teaching on the kingdom in a more direct and more dogmatic way. This teaching on the kingdom was not only very lofty and difficult in itself, but it was rendered more obscure by the opposed Messianic ideas of the Jews. In other words, the obscurity of Christ's new teaching was due to accidental circumstances over which He had no control. The obscurity was not a punishment. The kingdom parables in themselves remained a most suitable element in Christ's prudent and merciful plan of gradual revelation. As Vosté says, in reference to the parables of the lake:

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 13. It is to be remembered that the obscurity of which we are speaking does not pertain to all the subsequent teaching of Christ nor even to all the parables in that subsequent teaching. It is important to remember that the obscurity pertains to the kingdom parables and, even more specifically, to those kingdom parables that are concerned with the kingdom of God in a direct and dogmatic way. Cf. chapters 1 and 3 above.

Holzmeister maintains that the change in Christ's teaching consisted in this, that Christ no longer explained the parables to the people. He says, referring to the unexplained parable as "Hilfsmittel" and to the explanation as "die weitere Belehrung": "Der Herr brauchte auf dieses Hilfsmittel nicht deswegen zu verzichten, weil viele Hörer am Bilde hängen blieben und sich für die weitere Belehrung unreif erwiesen, die ihnen darum der Herr in pädagogischer Weisheit wenigstens einstweilen zu entziehen für gut fand." "Vom Angeblichen Verstockungszweck der Parabeln des Herrn," *BI*, 1934 (15), p. 333. His theory is expressed briefly in these words: "... die Entziehung der Erklärung, an deren Stelle die nur unvollkommene Erkenntnis des Bildes trat, war eine angemessene Strafe für die mangelhafte Disposition des Volkes." *Art. cit.*, p. 351. Cf. above (chap. 1, note 28) for Holzmeister's opinion that all the unexplained parables were obscure.

Libenter fatemur Dominum antea dixisse potius parabolas *morales*; heic vero apud lacum referuntur parabola *dogmaticae* de fundatione, incremento et de membris Regni. Similiter nos non latet, heic ac deinceps legi parabolas magis evolutas ac longiores; St. Matthaeus v.g. hic refert septem pulcherrimas parabolas. . . . Si deinceps tamen parabola videntur difficiliore, et si ipsi discipuli fatentur se non intellegere Christi parabolas, ratio non est quia inaugurat Magister novam methodum obscuram et obscurantem (stupenda sane nova methodus docendi!), sed quia incipit revelare altiores veritates: hic ergo haberetur potius progressus ulterior in revelatione mysteriorum Regni Dei. Ad hoc altius obiectum revelationis adumbrandum progressive, lente et eo securius, Christus misericors auditoribus sese accommodat parabolis utendo.<sup>10</sup>

Rose likewise says of the parables of the lake:

C'est un genre nouveau d'enseignement que le Sauveur inaugure; c'est la première fois qu'il touche à son mystère et qu'il dévoile son programme du royaume de Dieu. . . . Ailleurs . . . nous disions que le jour des paraboles marquait un progrès, une étape nouvelle dans la prédication de Jésus. Il dépasse le discours sur la montagne dont l'enseignement est tout moral. Il porte, en effet, sur la nature du royaume de Dieu, sur les lois de sa fondation et de son développement: toutes données qui constituaient la révélation proprement dite de Jésus et qui ruinaient les conceptions actuellement en cours. Proposées sans figure, dans leur réalité vive, elles auraient, on le conçoit aisément, ébloui la foule, qui n'était pas préparée. Enveloppées au contraire dans le tissu d'une allégorie harmonieuse, attachante pour le peuple, puisque toutes les comparaisons étaient empruntées à son labeur, à son expérience quotidienne, de même qu'à la nature qu'il avait sous ses yeux, terres fertiles, champs emblavés, sol rocheux, buisson d'épines, chemin foulé par les passants, elles pouvaient se laisser entrevoir assez clairement pour que l'auditeur, mis en goût et éveillé, redoublât son effort, en fixant son attention et en interrogeant.<sup>11</sup>

For the followers of the mercy theory, then, the obscurity of Christ's new teaching was due to the object of the kingdom parables. That object, the kingdom of God, was in itself difficult to compre-

<sup>10</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 152.

<sup>11</sup> *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, pp. 35, 36.

hend; and this initial difficulty was increased by the opposed Messianic ideas of the Jewish people. The justice theory, however, maintains that the obscurity in Christ's new teaching was a punishment. Christ changed from a simple presentation of His message to an obscure form of speech because the people had rejected His clear and simple teaching. Maldonatus, Knabenbauer, and Fonck, whom we have already quoted, are very clear in maintaining this opinion. Buzy expresses his opinion very simply: "Les paraboles sont le châtiment de l'inintelligence de la foule en face de discours plus lumineux."<sup>12</sup> Durand likewise says, referring to the parables of the kingdom and comparing them with Christ's previous teaching:

Ce ne seront plus des comparaisons faciles à saisir, des proverbes courant, des allusions transparentes aux usages de la vie quotidienne; mais des paraboles profondes sur les choses du règne de Dieu. C'est à travers un voile que, désormais, se laissera deviner la pensée de Jésus. . . . C'est par l'attitude qu'ils ont prise vis-à-vis de l'Évangile que les auditeurs de Jésus se sont distribués d'eux-mêmes en deux catégories: ceux du dedans et ceux du dehors. Les premiers, une fois introduits dans le royaume de Dieu, avanceront dans la connaissance de ses mystères; les autres sont, par la situation même où ils se sont mis, condamnés à voir les choses du dehors. Pour eux tout se passe en paraboles, c'est-à-dire en signes obscurs et équivoques, impénétrables à leur esprit d'orgueil, facilement pliables au gré de leurs préjugés.<sup>13</sup>

According to the justice theory, then, the use of the obscure kingdom parables was a punishment consequent on the previous fault of the people. Some of the defenders of this theory proceed to indicate passages in the New Testament which show this fault—passages, that is, which show the failure of the people to respond to the earlier and simple teaching of our Lord. Fonck, for example, refers to five texts: two from St. Matthew's Gospel, two from Luke, and one from Mark—all occurring before our Lord's teaching at the lake-side.<sup>14</sup> Now, it is evident immediately that we are

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 276.

<sup>13</sup> "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), pp. 762, 765.

<sup>14</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

here dealing with a question of Gospel chronology. Specifically, in regard to Fonck's argument, the question is whether these five accounts actually occurred prior to Christ's teaching at the lake-side. In the introductory chapter to this thesis we referred to the generally admitted uncertainty of Gospel chronology. What we said there also indicated that authors are not in agreement as to the relative fidelity of the different Evangelists to a strictly chronological order. It is largely on this score that Buzy attempts to destroy the force of Fonck's argument.<sup>15</sup> Buzy maintains that the two passages from St. Matthew's Gospel (xi. 20-24 and xii. 40-45) really occurred after Christ began to use the kingdom parables. Buzy supports this contention by pointing out that these two passages actually do occur after the parables of the lake in St. Mark's Gospel and by saying in reference to the Gospel of St. Matthew: ". . . de l'aveu de tous, son procédé se prête très peu à des observations chronologiques."<sup>16</sup> Of the two passages from St. Luke's Gospel, Buzy maintains that one (vii. 34) applies only to the Pharisees, and the other (vii. 9) is misinterpreted by Fonck. Finally, the passage from St. Mark's Gospel (iii. 21), Buzy maintains, is also misinterpreted. Fonck himself admits that the uncertainty of the chronological order in the Gospels is a strong objection against his thesis; but he maintains that the uncertainty of chronology is still

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 344 ff.

<sup>16</sup> At the present time authors are not agreed as to the chronological accuracy of St. Matthew's Gospel, considered either in itself or in comparison with the other Gospels. For our purposes it will suffice to indicate the disagreement of two Catholic scholars, both of them eminently qualified to speak on this question. Chapman maintains that St. Matthew follows a strict chronological order of events, and he would prefer St. Matthew's chronology to that of St. Mark or St. Luke. Cf. *The Four Gospels*, p. 31. Lagrange, however, distrusts St. Matthew's order, and he would prefer to follow St. Luke. Cf. *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 268. Referring to his own "Synopsis," Lagrange says: "It was meant to show that St. Luke's order and chiefly St. John's chronology ought to serve as the basis of a Life of Christ, inasmuch as such a life can be written at all." *Ibid.*, p. xv. From the quotations adduced in our introductory chapter from Lattey and Fillion, it is evident that Lattey also would distrust the order in St. Matthew's Gospel and would prefer to follow St. Luke, while Fillion would side with Chapman in defending the order in the first Gospel.

not sufficient to destroy his main contention. He says: "Even if one or other of the details should be given another place in the historical sequence of events, still the picture of the situation would remain unchanged in its principal features."<sup>17</sup> Skrinjar, who is also a very strong defender of the justice theory, is willing to go much farther than Fonck in this concession. He is ready to admit that it is very difficult to prove from the Gospels that, prior to the parables of the lake, the Jews had culpably rejected Christ. He says:

Nous sommes d'accord avec le R. P. J. Huby . . . en admettant dans les auditeurs de Jésus le manque d'une connaissance *salutaire* des vérités proposées par Jésus; ils ne saisissaient pas *pour affirmer*; seulement d'après nous, ce péché a été commis par le peuple avant l'enseignement parabolique et a été puni par cet enseignement, lequel consistait dans une soustraction plus radicale de la lumière divine. Nous ne devons pas nous étonner, si les Synoptiques ne nous ont pas mieux préparés à entendre le jugement sévère que Jésus prononce dans la péricope sur le but des paraboles. . . .<sup>18</sup>

Without going any further into this particular question, which is largely chronological, we can see the difficulty of the position of the defenders of the justice theory. An essential element in this theory is that there was a rejection of Christ's teaching prior to the use of the kingdom parables at the lake-side. Yet, the Gospels give scant evidence of such incredulity prior to Christ's teaching at the lake-side, and even that evidence is doubtful because of the uncertainty of chronological order in the Gospels. This lack of evidence must be considered to weaken the position of the

<sup>17</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 35.

<sup>18</sup> *Art. cit.*, pp. 443, 444. Some authors who defend the justice theory maintain that the fault of the people was not so much a positive rejection of the teaching of Christ as a negative reaction to His appeals. The people, they say, remained merely superficially interested and enthusiastic. They did not become really converted. This is the opinion of Skrinjar, as is evident from the words we have just quoted. Cf. also Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 348; Holzmeister, *art. cit.*, pp. 346, 349.

justice theory, since it casts doubt upon a necessary prerequisite of the theory.<sup>19</sup>

The justice theory, as we have described it thus far, is very harsh. Therefore, we hasten to add that there are very few, if any, authors who hold the justice theory in its pure and unmitigated form. The defenders of this theory, after presenting their views as we have described them up to the present, go on to add modifications to their theory.<sup>20</sup> These modifications all temper the severity

<sup>19</sup> Lagrange is quite opposed to the contention of the justice theory that the Gospels prove the people's rejection of the teaching of Christ and that in punishment our Lord began to speak to them in obscure language. "Nous pensons qu'on voit dans Marc aucune trace d'un changement dans l'attitude de la foule à l'égard de Jésus, ni dans les procédés de Jésus à l'égard de la foule. On ne peut donc alléguer aucun jugement de réprobation qui aurait été exécuté par Jésus. . . . Or, il suffit de lire Marc pour se persuader que Jésus n'a pas commencé alors à parler en paraboles; que, jusqu'à la passion, l'empressement de la foule auprès de lui a toujours été la même, et surtout, oh surtout! et cela n'aurait jamais du être mis en doute, que Jésus a toujours consacré ses paroles à faire du bien à cette foule." "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 10.

In much the same vein Prat says: "Mais soutenir que le Sauveur se rend à dessein obscure et inintelligible pour punir l'indifférence, la légèreté ou l'inconstance des foules, nous semble contraire à toute raison; car, outre qu'un changement profond d'attitude, visible déjà chez les scribes et les pharisiens, n'apparaît pas encore clairement dans la masse du peuple, si Jésus voulait les punir, c'est la remarque de saint Chrysostome, il n'avait qu'à se taire, au lieu de proposer des énigmes indéchiffrables." *Jésus Christ*, I, 340.

<sup>20</sup> We hesitate to say, categorically, that all authors without any exception hold the justice theory only in a mitigated form. To consider just the authors whom we have read—it is difficult to see in what respect Skrinjar modifies his view. He says, in reference to the result of the kingdom parables: "Le résultat prédit par Jésus est l'aveuglement des Juifs, . . . Ce résultat, avec ses conséquences, l'Homme-Dieu le prédit non seulement comme prévu, mais aussi comme voulu d'une certaine manière. . . . N.-S. ne veut pas positivement ni directement l'aveuglement du peuple; aucun catholique n'a jamais affirmé une pareille absurdité. Cependant Jésus veut positivement et directement quelque chose d'où l'aveuglement s'ensuivra—par la faute du peuple, bien entendu,—mais infailliblement. Dieu, Jésus comme Dieu, abandonne le peuple, ne lui donnant pas la grâce efficace de connaître les mystères du Règne, et cet abandon est fatal; c'est quant à l'infaillibilité de l'effet, comme si Jésus avait positivement aveuglé les Juifs." *Art. cit.*, *BI*, 1930, p. 446. Skrinjar seems to be mitigating his opinion when he says, again in reference to the

of the theory. They emphasize in various ways the mercy and goodness of Christ. Sometimes, as a matter of fact, authors go so far in modifying the justice theory that it becomes very difficult to see wherein they differ from the proponents of the pure mercy theory.

The modifications that the defenders of the justice theory introduce to temper the harshness and severity of their view fall into different categories. In a general way we can distinguish the following types:

(1) Some authors say that the kingdom parables, while being a deserved punishment, were nevertheless a merciful punishment. Christ, they say, foresaw that the people would continue to reject His message. If the message continued to be clear and simple, their sin would be greater; and their punishment would have to be proportionately more severe. But if the teaching now became obscure, their sin would be less; and their punishment would not be so harsh. Christ, therefore, to prevent a greater punishment, chose to speak obscurely. Theophylact long ago expressed this opinion very clearly. After mentioning that Christ spoke obscurely to the people and that consequently they did not understand His message, he says: “. . . and this was for their own good. For,

kingdom parables: “Les réserves de Jésus dans la manière de parler du Règne messianique devaient faire réfléchir le peuple, le guérir de sa torpeur intellectuelle et morale.” *Art. cit.*, p. 28. But continuing immediately: “De la part de Jésus, c’était un pas vers l’instruction complète sur les mystères du Règne, un pas seulement—et cela était un châtiment. La foule n’en a pas profité, elle est resté dans sa léthargie. C’était, sans le moindre doute, par sa faute; mais en même temps nous pouvons dire qu’elle n’a pas reçu la grâce efficace de profiter de ce châtiment medicinal, et que cette grâce même lui a été refusée à cause des négligences précédentes.” If our understanding of Skrinjar’s opinion is correct he says equivalently: because of their previous fault Christ spoke to the people in obscure kingdom parables, and, furthermore, because of their previous fault Christ denied the people the efficacious grace without which it was absolutely impossible for them to understand this obscure teaching. Once Skrinjar has maintained that in punishment Christ denied the efficacious grace that was necessary for the understanding of the parables, we believe that he must be said to hold the justice theory in a strict and unmitigated form. Whatever qualifications he then adds serve only to create confusion and contradiction.

lest they should be condemned more for having rejected mysteries that they understood, therefore Christ hid these mysteries from them. For he who understands and rejects, deserves more severe punishment.”<sup>21</sup> Durand likewise says: “Qui se refusait, de parti pris, à l’approfondir, était coupable sans doute de fermer les yeux à cette lumière indécise; mais, après tout, il l’était moins que s’il eût résisté à la vérité pleinement manifestée, au devoir catégoriquement déclaré.”<sup>22</sup>

(2) Other authors modify the justice theory by restricting the sentence of reprobation to a portion of our Lord’s listeners. Some of the people, they say, were well-disposed. They had been docile and had fully accepted the previous teaching of Christ. For them the kingdom parables would not be a punishment. Rather would these well-disposed persons profit from the parable teaching. They would understand some of the message of Christ contained in these parables. For the rest they would have recourse to Christ, as did the disciples, and they would ask Him to explain the meaning more fully. Thus, Plummer says, in reference to the “multitude” that listened to our Lord’s teaching: “They ‘have not’ a mind to welcome instruction, and therefore they are taught in a way which deprives them of instruction, although it is full of meaning to those who desire to understand and do understand.”<sup>23</sup> Van Steenkiste likewise distinguishes between the various groups that listened to our Lord: “. . . qui plures ipsi credere nolebant, in poenam pravae voluntatis nonnumquam obscure loquebatur, et specialem gratiam, qua parabolas explicabat, iis tantum, qui corde docili verba salutis

<sup>21</sup>. . . τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς τοῖς μὴ ἀξίοις οὖσι τῶν μυστηρίων, σκοτεινῶς λέγονται, καὶ δοκοῦσι μὲν βλέπειν, οὐ βλέπουσι δὲ. Καὶ ἀκούουσι μὲν, οὐ συνιούσι δὲ, καὶ τοῦτο εἰς εὐεργεσίαν αὐτῶν. Ἵνα γὰρ μὴ πλέον κατακριθῶσιν, ὥς μετὰ τὸ γνῶναι τὰ μυστήρια καταφρονησαντες αὐτῶν, τούτου ἔνεκεν ἀπέκρυφεν ὁ χριστὸς ἀπ’ αὐτῶν ταῦτα. Ὁ γὰρ γνωὺς, εἴτα καταφρονήσας, βαρυτέρως ἄξιος τιμωρίας. *Enarratio in Evangelium Lucae*, VIII, 4-10: MPG, 123, 800.

<sup>22</sup> A. Durand, “Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles,” *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 768. Holzmeister and Plummer also modify their view in this way. Cf. Holzmeister, *art. cit.*, p. 355; Plummer, “Parable (inNT),” *HDB*, Vol. III, p. 663.

<sup>23</sup> Plummer, *Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 220. Cf. also Barry, “Parables,” *CE*, Vol. II, p. 462.

excipiebant, largiebatur.”<sup>24</sup> Callan restricts the reprobation to the group of the Pharisees. In commenting on Mark iv. 12, where Christ foretells the fruitless results of the kingdom parables, Callan says: “This describes the state of obduracy and blindness which, because of their sins, the Pharisees and Scribes were allowed to fall into. What was for the good of others was for them an evil and a punishment.”<sup>25</sup>

(3) Other authors modify the justice theory by saying that the rejection was not complete or final. Plummer, for example, says: “But what the unsympathetic ‘hear without understanding’ they remember, because of its impressive form; and whenever their minds become fitted for it, its meaning will become manifest to them.”<sup>26</sup> And Lesêtre says: “Le Sauveur, sans nul doute, veut dérober ses mystères à la connaissance d’hommes mal disposés pour les entendre. . . . Toutefois sa manière de procéder, qui laisse aux Juifs le moyen de se convertir en tirant un certain profit de ses paraboles, ne constitue encore qu’un commencement de châtement.”<sup>27</sup>

These are the types of modification which the defenders of the justice theory add to their view. As is evident, they emphasize

<sup>24</sup> *Sanctum Jesu Christi Evangelium secundum Matthaeum*, I, 543.

<sup>25</sup> *The Four Gospels*, p. 210. In reference to the Pharisees authors of both schools of thought on the purpose of the parables admit an added reason why Christ used the obscure kingdom parables. The reason is that Christ had to protect Himself from these religious leaders of the Jews. The Pharisees were determined to bring about our Lord’s condemnation and death. But first they had to find a clear pretext. Therefore, in order to prevent a foreshortening of His ministry, Christ spoke obscurely. Cf., e.g., Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, I, 245; Mangelot, *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, pp. 242, 243; Fouard, *The Christ the Son of God*, I, 299; Knox, *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, 7; Callan, *The Four Gospels*, 90; Durand, “Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles,” *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 766; “Paraboles de l’Évangile,” *DAFC*, III, cols. 1575, 1576.

<sup>26</sup> *Gospel According to St. Luke*, p. 220.

<sup>27</sup> H. Lesêtre, “Parabole,” *DDLb*, Vol. IV, col. 2113. Holzmeister: “Dass der Heiland das Bild selbst vorlegte und dadurch allen irgendeine Erkenntnis vermittelte, war ausschliesslich ein Akt der Milde. Dass er aber nur das Bild vorlegte und die Wahrheit ihnen verweigerte, mit andern Worten, dass er bewusstweise dem Volke eine nur unvollkommen Erkenntnis gewährte, war zugleich ein Akt der Milde und eine Strafe.” *Art. cit.*, pp. 349, 350. Cf. above, note 9, for Holzmeister’s views on this question.

the goodness and mercy of Christ and they thereby temper the harshness of the strict justice theory. And, of course, in classifying these modifications, we do not mean to imply that they are exclusive of one another. The same authors sometimes adopt various of these modifications in tempering their view.

It is a fact, then, that the authors who hold the justice theory temper their opinion by adding modifications that emphasize the mercy and goodness of Christ. Now, this fact has led to great confusion and dispute among authors in regard to the classification of exegetes on the question of the purpose of the kingdom parables. It is strange and surprising to find authors who are opposed on this question of the purpose of the parables appealing to the same authorities to support their divergent views. It is even more surprising to find that authors who hold the same opinion differ as to the authors they can legitimately invoke in their favor.

We shall consider first the disagreement among authors who hold the same theory. Vosté, who holds the pure mercy theory, says at the beginning of his discussion: "Thesem demum communem et traditionalem in favorem misericordis intentionis Domini, probabimus."<sup>28</sup> Later he says that his theory is "traditionalis atque communior," and that "etiam hodie plerique exegetae, sive catholici sive extranei" defend it.<sup>29</sup> Lagrange, who also holds the pure mercy theory, agrees with Vosté to a certain extent. He says: "On a quelque sujet de s'étonner de la manière dont certains Pères ont été cités en faveur de l'obscurité voulue des paraboles."<sup>30</sup> His agreement with Vosté, however, is only partial; because he refers to the justice theory as "... opinion qui paraît dominer aujourd'hui parmi les exégètes, catholiques et indépendants."<sup>31</sup> Again, referring later to the followers of the justice theory, he says: "... les autres, comme tant d'exégètes depuis Maldonat, prenant trop à la lettre et dans un sens unique certaines paroles de Marc, ont abouti à ce résultat

<sup>28</sup> *Paraboliae Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 119.

<sup>29</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 147.

<sup>30</sup> "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 7, n. 2.

<sup>31</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 6.

qui paraît bien dur, que Jésus a choisi les paraboles parce qu'elles étaient obscures et qu'ainsi les auditeurs ne pussent pas comprendre, même s'ils avaient très fort voulu, *etiam si maxime vellent*." <sup>32</sup>

If defenders of the same opinion thus differ in their classification of authors, we can expect much greater confusion when we consider authors who disagree in their opinions. Thus, in contrast to what Lagrange and especially Vosté have just said, Fonck maintains: "The Fathers of the Church interpret the words concerning the object of the parables in this sense of a just punishment of God." <sup>33</sup> He then refers explicitly to: ". . . St. Cyril of Alexandria (or Victor of Antioch) . . . ; St. John Chrysostom . . . ; *Opus imperfectum* . . . ; Theophylact . . . ; Euthymius . . . ; St. Augustine . . . ; St. Bede . . . ; Druthmar . . . ; St. Thomas. . . ." <sup>34</sup> Further—and here Fonck is in opposition especially to Vosté—Fonck says, after having explained his justice theory: "The foregoing explanation of the object of the parables as far as unbelievers were concerned, which is adhered to by nearly all non-Catholics as well as Catholic commentators. . . ." <sup>35</sup> Durand, who also holds the justice theory, agrees with Fonck: "Notre manière d'envisager la parabole énigmatique revient en définitive à l'explication traditionnelle." <sup>36</sup> Again he says: "L'exégèse que nous venons de faire est celle de tous les anciens, de S. Irenée à S. Thomas." <sup>37</sup> It is worth nothing that in his discussion Durand includes Chrysostom among the Fathers who hold the justice theory. Lesêtre, another defender of the justice theory, likewise says: "Il faut reconnaître que, pour les Pères, ce texte implique l'idée d'un châtement véritable"; and he then refers to: "Chrysostom, Theophylact, Euthymius, Augustine, Bede, etc. . . ." <sup>38</sup> Skrinjar also says: "Le but aveuglant des paraboles

<sup>32</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>33</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, p. 39.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 40.

<sup>36</sup> "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 770.

<sup>37</sup> "Paraboles de l'Évangile," *DAFC*, Vol. III, col. 1574.

<sup>38</sup> "Parabole," *DDL*, Vol. IV, col. 2212. Cf. also Holzmeister, *art. cit.*, p. 349.

étant solidement établi par l'analyse des textes évangéliques, et leur interprétation traditionnelle. . . ." <sup>39</sup> And yet Maldonatus admits:

Plerique hunc putant esse sensum, ut dicat evangelista Christum se ad auditorum imbecillitatem accommodasse, ideoque parabolis et similitudinibus usum fuisse, ut homines ingenio tardi et non satis divinis rebus comprehendendis idonei facilius, quae decebantur, intelligerent. Ita non solum maior pars recentiorum interpretum, sed ex illis magnis atque antiquis Chrysostom. hom. in Matth. 45 et Theophylact. in huius loci commentariis. <sup>40</sup>

These references are sufficient to show that there is a great deal of disagreement, even among authors of the same school, in regard to the classification of exegetes on this question of the purpose of the kingdom parables. What is especially noteworthy in this disagreement is that both schools claim the support of three of the Church's greatest scholars—St. Augustine, St. Chrysostom, and St. Thomas Aquinas. Now, it will be profitable for us to

<sup>39</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 27.

<sup>40</sup> *Commentarium in Quatuor Evangelistas*, I, 725. Further instances of confusion in the classification of exegetes are not hard to find. Thus de Grandmaison says of Lagrange, in his classification of authors: "... following the Fathers and especially St. John Chrysostom he emphasizes instruction and mercy as at least their partial object." *Jesus Christ*, II, 39, note. Now, we have already shown that practically all authors can be said "to emphasize instruction and mercy as at least their partial object." De Grandmaison's description of the opinion of Lagrange, therefore, can hardly serve as a criterion for distinguishing his opinion from that of other authors. Furthermore, de Grandmaison's estimate of the support that Lagrange's opinion finds among the Fathers is in contradiction with the judgment of Fonck and other authors whom we have already quoted.

What is perhaps the height of confusion is found in an article by Lesêtre. Lesêtre rightly refers to Rose as a defender of the mercy theory. But then, quoting just the modification that Knabenbauer adds to his justice theory, Lesêtre classifies him with Rose. That Lesêtre really intends to put Rose and Knabenbauer in the same category is shown by the fact that he immediately proceeds to oppose to this first category the group of authors who "au contraire pensent que le texte d'Isaïe, VI, 9, 10, et sa citation dans saint Matthieu, marquent, non seulement une prévision certaine, mais aussi un effet voulu par Dieu." "Parabole," *DDL B*, Vol. IV, col. 2112.

examine the opinion of these three scholars in more detail.<sup>41</sup> Such a consideration will help us to understand the source of the confusion; and perhaps it will enable us to propose a better classification of authors.

St. Augustine expresses his opinion on the purpose of the parables in the following words:

An forte non absurde dicimus, quosdam Iudaeorum fuisse sanabiles; sed tanto tamen superbiae tumore periclitatos, ut eis expedierit primo non credere, et ad hoc fuisse caecatos, ut non intelligerent Dominum loquentem per parabolas, quibus non intellectis, non in eum crederent, non credentes autem, cum ceteris desperatis crucifigerent eum; atque ita post eius resurrectionem converterentur, quando jam de reatu mortis Domini amplius humiliati, vehementius diligerent a quo sibi tantum scelus dimissum esse gauderent: quoniam tanta erat eorum superbia, ut tali humiliatione esset dejicienda? <sup>42</sup>

<sup>41</sup> At least among Catholic authors Buzy presents the most complete discussion of the opinion of the Fathers in regard to the purpose of the parables. Cf. *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 286-313. Cf. also Holzmeister, *art. cit.*, esp. pp. 350-354; Vosté, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, pp. 129-142. Of the opinion of St. Jerome, Buzy says: "On regrettera aussi que saint Jerome n'ait pas approfondi davantage ce problème" (p. 298). After presenting some texts of St. Jerome, Buzy concludes as to his position: "D'où il suit que, pour saint Jerome, les paraboles n'étaient pas destinées à produire l'obscurité et l'aveuglement; elles visaient encore à instruire, bien que ce mode d'enseignement réclamât une coopération plus active de la part des auditeurs" (p. 299).

<sup>42</sup> *Quaestionum Septemdecim in Evangelium secundum Matthaeum Liber Unus*, XIV, 2; MPL, 35, 1372, 1373. The authenticity of this work is disputed. Morin maintains that it is of augustinian origin. Cf. "Un traité inédit attribué à saint Augustin," *Revue Bénédictine*, 1911 (27), pp. 8, 9. He says: "D'une part, il est difficile, impossible même, de méconnaître dans ces pages la touche d'Augustin." Bardenhewer favors this opinion of Morin. Cf. *Geschichte der Altkirchlichen Literatur*, IV, p. 486.

Besides, there is another proof that this is St. Augustine's opinion in regard to the purpose of the parables. A passage in St. John's Gospel (xii. 37 ff.) presents practically the same difficulty as the Synoptic text (Matt. xiii. 13-15; Mark iv. 11, 12; Luke viii. 10), which is the main objection against the mercy theory. The reference in St. John's Gospel is also to the unbelief of the Jews and the same passage in Isaiah is quoted. The difference is that in St. John's Gospel the reference is to the miracles and not to the parables. Now, in com-

Vosté quotes this text of Augustine in support of the mercy theory.<sup>43</sup> Yet Fonck refers to this very same place in Augustine's writings after his statement: "The Fathers of the Church interpret the words concerning the object of the parables in this sense of a just punishment of God."<sup>44</sup> The reason why both these authors can quote the text of Augustine in support of their own view is rather obvious from the passage itself. Fonck apparently considers only that part of Augustine's statement wherein Augustine says that it was the direct intention of Christ to blind the people, i. e., to keep them from understanding His message. Vosté goes further. He points out that Augustine held that our Lord really had a double purpose in using the kingdom parables: an immediate purpose of blinding the Jews, but a mediate or ultimate purpose of bringing about their conversion and salvation. Vosté briefly interprets Augustine's opinion as follows: "*Finis autem mediatas, intentus a Christo parabolice loquenti, est conversio illorum. Ipsa obduratio vel excaecatio Iudaeorum est artificium Dei et Christi misericordiae, qui, illa mediante, demum vult eorum conversionem.*"<sup>45</sup>

Fonck refers to St. John Chrysostom as holding that the obscurity of the kingdom parables was a punishment.<sup>46</sup> And Chrysostom does plainly say that Christ spoke to the people at first in plain

menting on this text in St. John's Gospel, St. Augustine presents the same opinion as is found in the work from which we have just quoted. "*An forte et hoc de supernae medicinae misericordia factum intelligendum est, ut quoniam superbae et perversae voluntatis erant, et suam iustitiam constituere volebant, ad hoc desererentur, ut excaecarentur; ad hoc excaecarentur, ut offenderent in lapidem offensionis, et impleretur facies eorum ignominia; atque ita humiliati quaerent nomen Domini, et non suam qua inflatur superbus, sed iustitiam Dei qua iustificatur impius? Hoc enim multis eorum profecit in bonum, qui de suo scelere compuncti, in Christum postea crediderunt: pro quibus et ipse oraverat dicens: Pater, ignosce illis. . . .*" *In Joannis Evangelium Tractatus CXXIV, LIII, 11; MPL, 35, 1779.*

<sup>43</sup> *Op. cit.*, 132.

<sup>44</sup> *Op. cit.*, 39.

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, 131.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 39. In reference to Chrysostom, Lagrange says that of all the Fathers "il est le seul qui ait traité la question sous ses divers aspects." "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 7.

and simple language, and that because the people rejected this simple teaching Christ used the obscure kingdom parables. "In the beginning He did not discourse with them in this way, but rather with great clarity; but since they perverted themselves, thenceforth He speaks to them in parables."<sup>47</sup> Vosté therefore makes this admission: "S. Joannes Chrysostom aegre admittit parabolas esse genus obscurum earumque usum esse punctionem. . . ."<sup>48</sup> Nevertheless, Vosté insists: "S. Joannes Chrysostom vero indubie est patronus thesauri misericordiae."<sup>49</sup> This insistence of Vosté is not hard to understand if we read Chrysostom further. Chrysostom says:

So also here He says: *Lest at any time they be converted and I should heal them*; showing that both their conversion was possible, and through penance they could be saved; and that not for His own glory, but for their salvation He was doing all things. For if He did not wish that they should hear and be saved, He ought to have been silent, not to have spoken in parables; but now by this very thing He stirs them up, by speaking obscurely.<sup>50</sup>

In other words, Chrysostom's opinion is this, that Christ used the obscure parables because the people had rejected His previous, simple teaching, but the very obscurity of the parables was a benefit because its purpose was to stir up the curiosity of the people and to arouse their interest. Buzy therefore represents the opinion of Chrysostom correctly when he says:

<sup>47</sup> Οὐκοῦν ἐξ ἀρχῆς οὐχ οὕτως αὐτοῖς διελέχθη, ἀλλὰ μετὰ πολλῆς τῆς σαφηνείας· ἐπειδὴ δὲ διέστρεφον ἑαυτοὺς, ἐν παραβολαῖς λοιπὸν φθέγγεται. *Commentarius in Sanctum Matthaeum Evangelistam*, Hom. 45 (46), 1. MPG, 58, 471.

<sup>48</sup> *Op. cit.*, 133.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, 129.

<sup>50</sup> Οὕτω δὲ καὶ ἐνταῦθ' αὖ φησι· Μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσι, καὶ ἰάσονται αὐτοὺς· δεικνὺς ὅτι καὶ τὸ ἐπιστραφῆναι δυνατόν, καὶ μετανόησαντες ἐν σωθῆναι· καὶ ὅτι οὐκ εἰς τὴν αὐτοῦ δόξαν, ἀλλ' εἰς τὴν αὐτῶν σωτηρίαν ἅπαντα ἐποίει. Εἰ γὰρ μὴ ἐβούλετο αὐτοὺς ἀκοῦσαι· καὶ σωθῆναι, σιγῆσαι ἔδει, οὐχὶ ἐν παραβολαῖς λέγειν. νῦν δὲ αὐτῷ τούτῳ κινεῖ αὐτοὺς, τῷ συνεσκιασμένα λέγειν. *Op. cit.*, col. 473.

Pourtant le caractère pénal de la parabole ne va pas au delà de son obscurité, et celle-ci elle-même est toute miséricordieuse. Elle ne tend ni en premier lieu, ni en dernier ressort, à obscurcir, à aveugler, à endurcir, encore moins à damner; elle veut et elle veut exclusivement stimuler les esprits engourdis, redresser les volontés déviées; c'est une obscurité qui ne vise qu'à faire la lumière. Et le saint Docteur est sur ce point d'une netteté, d'une énergie qui ne permettent aucune équivoque.<sup>51</sup>

The opinion of St. Thomas Aquinas also is involved in this dispute as to the classification of authors. Fonck, as we have seen, refers to St. Thomas after making the statement: "The Fathers of the Church interpret the words concerning the object of the parables in this sense of a just punishment of God."<sup>52</sup> Lagrange and Vosté, on the other hand, believe that St. Thomas favors their opinion. Vosté says: "Cum cl. P. Lagrange igitur censemus S. Thomam magis accedere ad Chrysostom et patrocinari thesi misericordiae."<sup>53</sup> Vosté, however, notes: "Buzy e contra et P. Durand opinantur Angelicum patrocinari thesi iustitiae vindicativae; quod sat mirum foret, cum Maldonatus, recentior huius opinionis patronus, minime auctoritatem Doctoris Universalis invocet, quinimmo contrariam sententiam declaret communum."<sup>54</sup>

St. Thomas makes statements that can easily be interpreted as representing the view that the obscurity of the parables was a punishment. "Christus quaedam turbis loquebatur in occulto, parabolis utens ad annuntianda spiritualia mysteria, ad quae capienda non erant idonei, vel digni: et tamen melius erat eis, vel sic sub tegumento parabolarum, spiritualium doctrinam audire, quam omnino ea privari."<sup>55</sup> In the same article the Angelic Doctor says: "Turbis Dominus in parabolis loquebatur . . . , quia non erant digni nec idonei nudam veritatem accipere. . . ." In these statements St.

<sup>51</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 293. It is worth noting again that Maldonatus and Fonck differ as to whether they can claim the support of St. John Chrysostom. Fonck refers to Chrysostom in support. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 39. But Maldonatus says that Chrysostom holds the opposite opinion. Cf. *op. cit.*, p. 725.

<sup>52</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 39.

<sup>53</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 141.

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 141, n. 1.

<sup>55</sup> *Summa Theologica*, III, q. xlii, art. 3.

Thomas seems to be maintaining that the parables were, at least to some extent, a punishment. However, in commenting on the words of St. Matthew, "Et locutus est eis multa in parabolis,"<sup>56</sup> he says:

. . . Secunda ratio est, quia per huiusmodi parabolas homines rudes melius docentur. Unde homines, scilicet rudes, quando divina sub similitudinibus explicantur, melius capiunt et retinent. . . . Et quare multas proposuit parabolas? Ratio una est, quia in multitudine hominum diversi diversimode sunt affecti; ideo diversificare debuit ut congrueret diversis affectibus. Alia ratio est, quia spiritualia semper sunt occulta; ideo per temporalia non plene manifestari possunt, ideo per diversa habent manifestari.<sup>57</sup>

This brief consideration of the opinions of Augustine, Chrysostom, and Thomas Aquinas is sufficient for our purposes. We have seen that their support is enlisted by both sides in this controversy on the purpose of the parables. And we have seen that there are explicit texts to which both sides can reasonably appeal to support their contentions. Therefore, even from the few texts we have quoted, the cause of the confusion in classifying these three learned Doctors of the Church is obvious. The truth is that these scholars all hold the mitigated justice theory. They combine the elements of justice and mercy in their opinion. Consequently they can easily be quoted by the defenders of the opposed schools on the purpose of the parables. When they speak of the unworthiness of the Jews and of the parables as a punishment, they can be quoted by the supporters of the justice opinion. On the other hand, when they mitigate their opinion with considerations that emphasize the mercy and goodness of Christ, they can be quoted by the supporters of the pure mercy opinion. It is with very good reason, therefore, that

<sup>56</sup> Matt. xiii. 3. These words form the introduction to the parable of the Sower. "And he spoke to them many things in parables, saying, 'Behold the sower went out to sow, etc. . . .'" The parable of the Sower is one of the kingdom parables; and it is followed by six other parables, all of which belong to the specific group of eight kingdom parables. Consequently, it cannot be said that St. Thomas does not have the kingdom parables in mind when he makes the following comments.

<sup>57</sup> *Evangelium Secundum Matthaeum*, pp. 182, 183.

Buzy criticizes the adherents of both schools for their partiality in quoting authors to support their views; although Buzy is here directing his remarks especially against the proponents of the pure mercy opinion. Referring to the pure mercy theory, he says:

Enfin, cette opinion ne tient pas assez compte d'une *donnée traditionnelle* que, de son côté, la thèse de justice exagérerait manifestement; nous voulons parler de cette assertion qui se retrouve sans aucune exception au fond de tous les témoignages patristiques, plus accentuée dans l'école augustinienne, plus adoucie dans l'école de saint Chrysostome, savior que les paraboles sont de quelque manière le châtement des dispositions fâcheuses de la foule.<sup>58</sup>

The Fathers, in other words, are practically unanimous in holding that the parables were a punishment. The defenders of the pure mercy theory do not recognize the full force of this testimony. The defenders of the justice theory, on the other hand, exaggerate this patristic support. They do not take sufficient account of the modifications which all the Fathers add to their view.<sup>59</sup>

The conclusion that follows from all this discussion of the classification of authors is that the traditional opinion is the mitigated justice theory. Now, must our conclusion be left in this rather indefinite form? Can we come no nearer the truth than to say that the mitigated justice theory is the traditional opinion? For the most part, we think that no further refinements can be made. As Charue says: "Les exégètes catholiques, d'ailleurs, combinent plus ou moins bien les deux explications, mais, s'ils sont d'accord pour dire que dans les paraboles 'la justice et la paix s'harmonisent,' la description de cette harmonie revêt des nuances multiples."<sup>60</sup> In most cases it is very difficult to say in what precise proportions an author combines the elements of justice and mercy in his theory.

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 362.

<sup>59</sup> Durand, who holds the justice theory, refers to the defenders of the justice theory in his classification of authors and then adds: "Cependant, le châtement de l'infidélité des Juifs ne va pas sans un sentiment de miséricorde." "Paraboles de l'Évangile," *DAFC*, Vol. III, col. 1576.

<sup>60</sup> *L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, p. 141.

To illustrate this last point, it will be helpful for us to refer further to the opinions of Maldonatus and Fonck. We select these two authors because they are universally recognized as outstanding defenders of the justice theory.

Maldonatus seems almost to contradict himself. First, he very clearly explains his theory, which is definitely the justice theory. But then, after mentioning modifications that other authors add to their views on the purpose of the parables, he says:

Sed quocumque tandem modo hic locus intelligatur, certe non ita intelligitur, ut significetur, Christum nolle, ut convertantur et peccata illis remittantur. Illae enim nobis, quae non ambiguae, sed certae, non obscurae, sed dilucidae sunt, fixae debent esse sententiae, velle Deum omnes homines salvos fieri, nolle quemquam perire, nolle mortem peccatoris, sed magis ut convertatur et vivat, non voluntatis eius mortem esse impii, et aliae pene innumerabiles generis eiusdem, quibus tota Scriptura sacra plena est.<sup>61</sup>

Fonck does not go quite so far in modifying his opinion. Nevertheless, his modifications are considerable and they are more definite than those of Maldonatus. He says, first, that many of the parables were intended for the benefit of all Christ's listeners:

Respecting the unconverted multitude to whom He propounded His parables, we may say that in a portion of these similes our Lord had the same end in view as He had when He addressed parables to His disciples. For if we accept the parables according to the meaning of the Evangelists as figurative illustrations of supernatural truth, we must also admit with reference to the people that in many of His similes our Lord intended this precious benefaction for all His hearers. He would attain in their regard the selfsame object which was the underlying motive of the figurative mode of speech.<sup>62</sup>

Furthermore, Fonck says, there were many believers among the Jews besides the Apostles and disciples, and for all these people all the parables, including the obscure kingdom parables, would be of benefit. He says:

<sup>61</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 269, on Matt. xiii. 13.

<sup>62</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 30.

Besides, we must not, right off, regard all our Lord's hearers, with the exception of His disciples, as unbelievers. Even if the greater number of the people daily turned away from our Redeemer in ever-increasing stiff-necked obduracy, still, surely, there were, apart from the twelve Apostles and the seventy-two disciples, many good people amongst the crowd who were not adverse to further instruction. Perhaps St. Mark in the expression οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα (Mc. iv. 10) does not refer to the disciples alone, but may also include the better disposed amongst the people. In any case, our Lord had, with reference to these well-disposed hearers, the same object in view in His parables as He had regarded His disciples.<sup>63</sup>

Finally, even for the unbelievers, the obscure kingdom parables were not without some benefit.

Besides, mercy had its part in the object of these parables, even with regard to the people. One or another of the exhortations could be understood by all, and the obscure, figurative discourse contained, at least, an invitation to seek and inquire further after the Truth. Thus our Lord spoke. "And with many such parables He spoke to them the word, according as they were able to hear" (Mc. iv. 33), because they were no longer capable of being instructed by any other method in the nature and the dignity of the kingdom of the Messiah.<sup>64</sup>

These quotations show to what extent Maldonatus and Fonck, two outstanding defenders of the justice theory, modify their opinion. No doubt they hold the justice theory; but, it must be added immediately, they hold the theory only in a greatly modified form. To attempt to measure in what precise proportion they combine the elements of mercy and justice would be exceedingly difficult. The same difficulty would be encountered, even from the very nature of the problem we are considering, in trying to analyze the opinions of other authors. Sometimes, of course, it can be discerned that an author favors one quality—Christ's infinite justice or His infinite mercy—more than the other; but, much more often, it is difficult to say in which direction the author leans.

<sup>63</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 31.

<sup>64</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 39, 40.

Nevertheless, we do believe that a certain group of authors should be withdrawn from this general category of defenders of the mitigated justice theory. These authors, we believe, should be classed with the defenders of the pure mercy theory. They speak of the fault of the Jewish people and of the obscurity of the parables as a punishment for that fault. But then they proceed to define the punishment in such a way that nothing remains of it except the term itself. In this group we believe the following authors should be included: Chrysostom, Theophylact, Buzy, Charue, Lebreton, and de Grandmaison.

Buzy and Charue are very explicit in describing their opinions. Buzy says very definitely that the parables were a punishment: "Les paraboles sont un châtiment des dispositions fâcheuses de la foule."<sup>65</sup> But then he adds: "Hâtons-nous de préciser les proportions exactes que comporte à nos yeux le châtiment. Il est si peu voulu en lui-même et pour lui-même, il représente si peu dans l'intention divine un terme absolu et définitif, qu'au contraire *il est tout entier ordonné à la miséricorde.*"<sup>66</sup> Buzy explains his opinion further:

Jésus ne *voulait* donc pas aveugler, il *voulait* éclairer et instruire; il ne *voulait* pas endurcir, il ne *voulait* qu'une chose, convertir. Son but était que tous les Juifs le reconnussent pour Messie, qu'ils devinssent membres du Royaume, et, comme tels, bénéficiaires de tous ses avantages spirituels. Les Paraboles étaient, dans sa pensée, un traité populaire du Royaume, auquel la profusion des comparaisons donnait même la physionomie d'un catéchisme en images. Bien comprises, elles eussent répandu dans la multitude des notions exactes sur ces réalités religieuses; elles eussent éliminé, corrigé, enrichi, surélevé les notions en cours, et préparé les esprits à reconnaître le vrai Messie dans l'humble fondateur de royaume qu'était Jésus. Et, avec la foi, tous les biens surnaturels auraient afflué.<sup>67</sup>

Proceeding further, Buzy tries to explain in what the punishment of the Jews consisted. He contrasts the parable method that Christ

<sup>65</sup> *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 363.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 378. We remind the reader that all italics in quotations throughout this dissertation are those of the authors being quoted.

<sup>67</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 379.

actually used with a parable method which would have been one of pure mercy. He says: "Des paraboles claires par elles-mêmes, ou suffisamment interprétées, eussent été la miséricorde pure et simple, la miséricorde épanouie. Des paraboles difficiles, obscures, y apportaient des conditions et réserves."<sup>68</sup> Yet, on the very next page Buzy explains very clearly why Christ could not use language that was more simple, plain, and clear. He says:

Or, il était aussi délicat de parler du Royaume que du Messie devant ces auditoires galiléens. D'un côté, le corps des Pharisiens et des scribes n'épiait qu'une occasion de se scandaliser, de crier à la prétention, voire au blasphème; d'un autre côté, avec le peuple, les choses menaçaient toujours de tourner au délire, et ici le délire menait directement au tragique. D'un côté donc, Jésus avait à ménager des susceptibilités aussi ombrageuses que vigilantes; de l'autre, il devait se garder des excès d'une bonne volonté au service de préjugés irréductibles. Néanmoins il ne pouvait plus se taire. L'heure était venue de déclarer de quelque manière l'objet de sa mission. Il allait le faire, en soumettant sa parole à un système de précautions, qui constituent précisément l'économie de la révélation messianique.<sup>69</sup>

Charue likewise holds an opinion on the purpose of the parables which seems to retain the element of punishment in name only. The nature of his opinion is quite evident from his conclusion. "Ainsi les paraboles, choisies et conservées par Jésus dans un but de miséricorde seulement, furent et restèrent obscures, et cette obscurité même, indépendante de la volonté du Sauveur, fut la punition de la nation juive et la cause de son aveuglement. . . . En résumé,

<sup>68</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 381.

<sup>69</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 382. Buzy says—as we have just quoted him—that the method of Christ would have been one of pure mercy, if Christ had used parables clear in themselves or if He had sufficiently interpreted the parables. Now, we have shown (especially in chap. 3) that the parables were clear in themselves and that the obscurity came from accidental circumstances, namely, the lofty nature of the subject of Christ's teaching (i. e., the kingdom of God), and the opposed Messianic ideas of the Jews which made the subject still more difficult. Furthermore, in regard to Christ's interpretation of the parables, He was certainly ready and eager to explain them to all who wished such an explanation and were prepared to receive it.

Jésus ne montre que de la miséricorde.”<sup>70</sup> Christ’s purpose, Charue here says, was one of mercy and mercy only. Yet, he maintains, the parables in themselves were a punishment and were the cause of the blindness of the Jews. Now, when we read the rest of Charue’s discussion, we find an admirable description of the function and purpose of the kingdom parables. It is extremely hard to see in what respect they are anything but a benefit for the people. They are far from being a punishment. According to Charue’s own description the parables eventually became, at most, an occasion—never a cause—of the blindness of the people. Charue’s view, as will be evident from the following quotation, is in perfect accord with that of the defenders of the pure mercy theory:

Sans aller jusqu’aux déclarations formelles sur sa messianité, sans exposer encore tous les caractères de son royaume, il parlait cependant du règne de Dieu et, s’accommodant au genre populaire, il racontait des paraboles. Certaines allusions sous forme de traits allégoriques pouvaient donner lieu à des difficultés d’interprétation, mais le sens fondamental était clair et intelligible. Et cependant, les Juifs ne comprirent pas, parce qu’ils avaient l’esprit obsédé par des préjugés nationalistes et eschatologiques sur la venue du Messie et son royaume. Même les Apôtres ne saisirent pas, et Jésus s’en étonna. Ces paraboles, si belles et si claires en soi, devenaient des énigmes à cause des erreurs fondamentales qui regnaient autour de leur objet principal. . . . Pour donner à tout son peuple l’intelligence parfaite de sa doctrine, Jésus aurait dû combattre en face les préjugés, divulguer enfin d’une façon complète le secret du Royaume, le secret messianique, et il ne le pouvait, sous peine de compromettre sa mission même auprès de l’humanité. Plus de lumière momentanée n’aurait servi qu’à aveugler et perdre plus irrémédiablement ses auditeurs, et cette lumière se fût éteinte sans avoir pu éclairer le monde.<sup>71</sup>

The other authors that we have mentioned speak in much the same way as Buzy and Charue.<sup>72</sup> They speak of the obscurity of the

<sup>70</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 144.

<sup>71</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 131, 132.

<sup>72</sup> Cf. Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, I, 242, 245, 248; II, 443; de Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, II, 41. We have already discussed Chrysostom’s opinion previously in this chapter. Theophylact’s opin-

parables as a punishment for the previous fault of the Jews. But, when they explain their views, all punishment disappears except the term itself. We think, therefore, that they should be classified with the defenders of the pure mercy opinion.

In concluding this consideration of the opinions of authors in regard to the purpose of the kingdom parables, we would suggest the following classification: (1) The defenders of the *mitigated justice* opinion. This is the traditional opinion. It combines, in varying proportions according to the different authors, the elements of justice and mercy. (2) The defenders of the *pure mercy* theory. This view is defended by a considerable number of recent writers, including Lagrange, Vosté, Rose, Mangenot, Prat, Huby, Batiffol, and Knox.<sup>73</sup> (3) There is a special group of authors whom we have just discussed. They speak of punishment, but their explanations show that they should rather be classified with the defenders of the pure mercy opinion. Included in this group are Chrysostom, Theophylact, Buzy, Charue, Lebreton, and de Grandmaison.

Now, in the course of this chapter we have said a great deal about the position of the defenders of the justice theory. We have explained the theory that they hold in regard to the purpose of the kingdom parables. However, we have said very little about the actual arguments they use in support of their position. Therefore, it now becomes our task to consider these arguments—to present them, to examine them, and to see whether they constitute a valid objection against the pure mercy theory.

ion is very similar to that of Chrysostom; as Buzy says: "Réserve faite des modalités qui lui sont propres, on peut dire que Théophylacte est, en somme, un disciple fidèle de saint Chrysostome." *Op. cit.*, p. 303. For further expression of Buzy's own opinion, cf. *op. cit.*, 339 ff, 352, 355, 363.

<sup>73</sup> Cf. Lagrange, especially "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon saint Marc., *RB*, 1910 (VII), pp. 5-35; *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, I, 175-192; *Évangile de Saint Marc*, on Mark iv. 10-12; Vosté, *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, pp. 119-163; Rose, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, pp. 34-37; *Studies on the Gospels*, esp. p. 112, note 1; Mangenot, *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, 237-252; Prat, "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), pp. 198-213; *Jésus Christ*, I, 319-344; Huby, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, pp. 100-107; Batiffol, *L'enseignement de Jésus*, pp. 27, 28.

## CHAPTER VI

### THE INTERPRETATION OF A DIFFICULT SYNOPTIC TEXT

THE principal argument in favor of the justice or punishment theory of the parables is a passage in the Synoptic Gospels. In this passage Christ is apparently revealing the purpose of the kingdom parables; and this purpose, apparently, is that Christ wishes to keep the people from understanding His message. The texts read as follows:

Matt. xiii.

10. And the disciples came up and said to him: "Why dost thou speak to them in parables?"

11. And he answered and said: "To you it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven, but to them it is not given.

12. For to him who has shall be given, and he shall have abundance; but from him who does not have, even that which he has shall be taken away.

13. This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see, and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand.

14. In them is being fulfilled the prophecy of Isaias, who says: 'Hearing you will hear, but not understand; and see-

Mark iv.

10. And when he was alone, those who were with him and the Twelve asked him about the parables.

11. And he said to them: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God; but to those outside, all things are treated in parables,

12. that 'Seeing they may see, but not perceive; and hearing they may hear, but not understand; lest perhaps at any time they should be converted, and their sins be forgiven them.'"

Luke viii.

9. But his disciples then began to ask him what this parable meant.

10. He said to them: "To you it is given to know the mystery of the kingdom of God, but to the rest in parables, that 'Seeing they may not see, and hearing they may not understand.'"

Matt. xiii.

ing you will see, but not perceive.

15. For the heart of this people has been hardened, and with their ears they have been hard of hearing, and their eyes they have closed; lest at any time they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their mind, and be converted, and I heal them.'"<sup>1</sup>

It cannot be denied that on first sight these texts favor the justice theory. Christ apparently says that He is using the kingdom

<sup>1</sup> The Greek text reads:

Matt. xiii. 10: Καὶ προσελθόντες οἱ μαθηταὶ εἶπαν αὐτῷ· διὰ τί ἐν παραβολαῖς λαλεῖς αὐτοῖς; 11. ὁ δὲ ἀποκριθεὶς εἶπεν αὐτοῖς· ὅτι ὑμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τῶν οὐρανῶν, ἐκείνοις δὲ οὐ δέδοται. 12. ὅστις γὰρ ἔχει, δοθήσεται αὐτῷ, καὶ περισσευθήσεται· ὅστις δὲ οὐκ ἔχει, καὶ ὃ ἔχει ἀρθήσεται ἀπ' αὐτοῦ. 13. διὰ τοῦτο ἐν παραβολαῖς αὐτοῖς λαλῶ, ὅτι βλέποντες οὐ βλέπουσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες οὐκ ἀκούουσιν οὐδὲ συνιούσιν. 14. καὶ ἀναπληροῦνται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία 'Ἡσαΐου ἡ λέγουσα' 'Ἀκοῇ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε. 15. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν, καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς αὐτῶν ἐκάμμυσαν, μὴ ποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνώσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

Mark iv. 10: Καὶ ὅτε ἐγένετο κατὰ μόνας, ἡρώτων αὐτὸν οἱ περὶ αὐτὸν σὺν τοῖς δώδεκα τὰς παραβολάς. 11. καὶ ἔλεγεν αὐτοῖς· ὑμῖν τὸ μυστήριον δέδοται τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ· ἐκείνοις δὲ τοῖς ἔξω ἐν παραβολαῖς τὰ πάντα γίνεται, 12. ἵνα βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ μὴ ἴδωσιν, καὶ ἀκούοντες ἀκούωσιν καὶ μὴ συνῶσιν, μήποτε ἐπιστρέψωσιν καὶ ἀφεθῇ αὐτοῖς.

Luke viii. 9: 'Ἐπρωτῶν δὲ αὐτὸν οἱ μαθηταὶ αὐτοῦ, τίς αὕτη εἴη ἡ παραβολή. ὁ δὲ εἶπεν· 'Υμῖν δέδοται γινῶναι τὰ μυστήρια τῆς βασιλείας τοῦ Θεοῦ, τοῖς δὲ λοιποῖς ἐν παραβολαῖς, ἵνα βλέποντες μὴ βλέπωσιν καὶ ἀκούοντες μὴ συνῶσιν.

We have quoted the Greek text according to Merk, *Novum Testamentum Graece et Latine*. Whatever New Testament passages we shall hereafter quote from the Greek will be taken from this edition of Merk.

parables in order that the people may not understand His teaching on the kingdom. Therefore, apart from any other considerations, this Synoptic passage in itself seems to be a very strong argument in favor of the justice theory. The force of the argument is indicated by Lebreton:

Let us suppose that the above verses were not found in the Gospels at all. If, in reading the parables of the kingdom of God, we should find ourselves asking why our Blessed Lord put forth His teaching under this particular form at all, we should reply that it was to make Himself better understood to His hearers, by presenting truths, otherwise beyond them, in a form familiar to themselves. But if we read the passage we have just quoted, does it not seem that Christ's purpose was quite different, and that of set purpose He used figurative language, which His hearers would be sure not to understand, in order to put their blindness beyond possibility of cure? <sup>2</sup>

Prat likewise says:

N'étaient les passages bien connus des trois Synoptiques, nous dirions que Jésus adopta ce mode d'enseignement parce qu'il est plus populaire et le plus efficace, le plus apte à instruire les foules en captivant leur attention et en fixant leurs souvenirs, le plus digne enfin de celui qui a voulu assumer nos faiblesses, compatir à nos infirmités et condescendre à nos ignorances. Mais la thèse de la miséricorde absolue se heurte, du moins en apparence, aux textes des évangélistes, qu'on a bien l'air de solliciter si l'on élimine l'idée de justice et de châtement.<sup>3</sup>

The followers of the justice theory, therefore, find in this Synoptic text the principal argument in support of their theory. At the same time, the defenders of the mercy theory realize that this text constitutes the strongest argument against their theory. Usually the followers of the justice theory appeal to the text as it is found

<sup>2</sup> *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, Vol. I, p. 241.

<sup>3</sup> "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 205. In reference to Mark iv. 11, 12, Batiffol says: "À s'en tenir à ces paroles du Sauveur, la parabole serait donc parfois une énigme, et cette énigme serait intentionnellement incompréhensible aux Juifs à qui le Sauveur l'aurait proposée." *L'enseignement de Jésus*, p. 26.

in the Gospel of St. Mark. This fact is clearly expressed in Simòn's summary of opinions on the purpose of the parables. He says:

E catholicis, alii *thesim justitiae* propugnant, alii, contra, *thesim misericordiae* tuentur. Illorum sententia, Christus parabolicam praedicationem turbis proposuit praevidens eas praedicationis momenta non esse intellecturas, idque explicito fecit consilio judaicam pervicaciam puniendi, quod Mc. et Luc. fidelius expresserunt particula finali *iva*: *ut videntes videant et non videant*, etc. . . .<sup>4</sup>

It must be admitted, we repeat, that the Synoptic text apparently favors the punishment theory. We would make a further admission. We are willing to grant that if the words and expressions used in the text are to be interpreted according to our way of thinking and speaking, the text would, even in the final analysis, stand as an irrefutable argument in favor of the justice theory. Our Lord says that He is using the parables in order that (*iva*) the people may not understand. According to our way of speaking these words can have only one meaning, namely, that it is the direct purpose and intention of Christ to keep the people from understanding His message. However, the text of Scripture is not to be interpreted according to our habits of thought and expression. Rather, the text of Scripture is to be interpreted according to the manner of thought and expression of the writers themselves. Now, we know

<sup>4</sup> *Novum Testamentum* (Praellectiones Biblicae), Vol. I, p. 204. Lagrange says of the text in Mark: "C'est le point d'appui principal des exégètes catholiques qui admettent l'obscurité voulue des paraboles." "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 21. Lagrange considers just the text of Mark in his discussion on the purpose of the parables. The reasons he gives for his procedure serve to indicate why it is that the defenders of the justice theory appeal particularly to the text of Mark for support of their position: "On ne saurait nous reprocher d'avoir choisi Marc pour échapper aux difficultés de sujet. C'est précisément Marc qui a employé les expressions les plus fortes: on a même dit les plus dures et les plus étranges. De plus, il est permis de croire qu'il était connu de saint Luc et que notre saint Matthieu grec en dépend aussi. C'est donc bien dans Marc que se trouve le noeud de tout le problème." *Art. cit.*, pp. 5, 6. The text in Luke, we may add, is much the same as the text in Mark. The difference between them is that the text in Luke is briefer and somewhat less severe.

that the Evangelists who composed this Synoptic text, as well as our Lord whose words are being reported, were Semites. Consequently, the interpretation of the text is to be made according to Semitic habits of thought and expression.<sup>5</sup>

We must, therefore, refer briefly to the properties and peculiarities of Semitic speech. The Semite prefers the concrete and imaginative to the abstract, logical, and metaphysical. As Condamin says, speaking of the prophets: "... car ils ne peuvent pas présenter au peuple des idées abstraites: la langue hébraïque ne s'y prête pas, ni le génie des auditeurs. . . . Mais l'inspiration n'empêche pas les prophètes d'être des hommes, des poètes, et de parler hébreu."<sup>6</sup> Barry likewise says:

. . . But system, or technical metaphysics, does not appeal to the Semite; and our Sacred Books were never written with a view to it. If, however, system be not made the vehicle of teaching, what shall a prophet employ as its equivalent? The image or comparison remains. It is primitive, interesting, and easily remembered; and its various applications give it a continual freshness.<sup>7</sup>

As a natural consequence of this preference for the concrete and imaginative, Semitic languages betray a tendency toward exaggeration and imprecision. In the words of Lagrange: "Généralisation exagérée, imprécision et manque de nuances sont des fauts du génie sémitique dont l'inspiration n'a pas préservé les auteurs sacrés."<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Davis: "We expect to experience difficulty in understanding quickly and certainly what was written in another language at another time and for another people. It is easy for an Englishman to miss the point, when scripture is expressed in idioms and phrases proper to the Semite languages." "The Gospels as a Source of Dogma," *New Testament*, pp. 302, 303.

<sup>6</sup> "Prophétisme Israélite," *DAFC*, Vol. IV, col. 419.

<sup>7</sup> "Parables," *CE*, Vol. XI, p. 460.

<sup>8</sup> "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 24. Goodier thinks that the Synoptic text we are considering is an instance of Semitic hyperbole. He says: "Naturally, to the more literal European mind, these words of our Lord have given rise to much discussion. Did He really mean what He said? Did He really wish that some of His hearers, indeed the great majority of those who listened to Him on the lake-side at Capernaum, should not understand what He taught? I would venture to

Even apparent contradictions will sometimes result from the Semite's dislike of logical analysis. Skrinjar says in this connection:

Comme les auteurs sacrés n'ont pas écrit de traités scientifiques, et surtout qu'ils n'ont jamais eu l'idée de faire une synthèse de leurs doctrines, il peut se faire qu'il y ait entre deux vérités qu'ils enseignent, des contradictions apparentes. Cette sorte d'antinomie doit surprendre encore moins dans les écrits qui sont des produits du génie sémitique, lequel, étant moins analytique et plus imaginaire, se soucie moins de concilier deux vérités en apparence contradictoires.<sup>9</sup>

What we have said now is sufficient to indicate some of the traits of Semitic thought and expression. We have noted the preference for the concrete and imaginative, and the tendency toward imprecision and exaggeration. However, for the purposes of our present problem we must become more specific. We wish, therefore, to indicate a particular trait of Semitic expression. In reference to God's influence and control over the actions of men, the Semite often does not distinguish between the different modalities of God's causality. Especially does the Semite often fail to distinguish between the permissive causality of God and His direct causality. As Prat says:

Les Sémites ne distinguent pas comme nous les diverses modalités de la cause première et du vouloir divin. Pour eux, "vouloir, désirer, ordonner, permettre" et, d'autre part, "faire, faire faire, laisser faire, donner occasion," s'expriment souvent par le même mot. D'après cette manière de parler—impropre tant qu'on voudra, mais familière aux Hébreux—tout ce qui arrive, même l'abus de la volonté humaine, est censé voulu et causé par Dieu, parce qu'il le permet quand il pourrait l'empêcher.<sup>10</sup>

say that no Asiatic would think that, neither in His time nor now. He would say that this passage is but an instance of that hyperbolic way of speaking which is common in the East; he would also add that the parable, requiring application on the part of the hearer, was the normal way of teaching." *"The Parables," New Testament*, p. 179.

<sup>9</sup> "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1930 (11), p. 292.

<sup>10</sup> *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 342, 343.

This statement of Prat is a very comprehensive expression of the Semitic peculiarity of expression that we believe should be used in the interpretation of the Synoptic text. Stated briefly as a principle, this Semitic habit of expression would be as follows: Often the Semite does not distinguish in expression between God's permissive causality and His direct causality; and sometimes he expresses God's permissive causality as His direct causality.<sup>11</sup>

It is this Semitic peculiarity of expression that we believe should be applied in the interpretation of the Synoptic text under discussion. The text reads: "... all things are treated in parables, that 'Seeing they may see, but not perceive; and hearing they may hear, but not understand . . .'" (Mark iv. 11, 12). In this statement Christ is really expressing, not His purpose in using the parables, but rather the result of the parable teaching. That result is the people's failure to understand His teaching. Admittedly, Christ expresses this permitted result in a way that is very unusual, as far as our mode of expression is concerned. He expresses this result as if it were His purpose or intention, since the conjunction is *iva*, which indicates purpose. But Christ is a Semite and He adopts the manner of speaking of His Semitic contemporaries. Therefore, He must be allowed the right to speak indistinctly in regard to divine causality and even to express the permissive causality of God as His direct purpose or intention.

<sup>11</sup> There is place, strictly speaking, for both parts of this statement. The first part, concerning the lack of distinction in expression, is found especially where the Hiphil conjugation of the Hebrew verb is used, as we shall see later from various examples. The second part of the statement is exemplified especially in purpose clauses. This whole principle will become clearer as we proceed. Our primary interest, of course, is with the Semite's mode of expression. We are not so concerned about his manner of thought. In fact, it seems rather difficult to determine to what extent this confusion in expression is due to a general imprecision of thought in regard to causality, and to what extent it is due to imprecision in theological concepts. Judging only from the observations of the various authors whom we shall quote in this chapter and the next we would venture the following summary statement: Corresponding to the Semite's imprecision of thought in regard to causality in general, there is a lack of distinction in expression; this imprecision in thought and expression is more pronounced in reference to God's causality because of the Semite's realization of the universal causality of God.

This explanation of the text of Mark is defended, explicitly, by Lagrange, Vosté, Buzy, Grandmaison, and Charue. Since this interpretation seems so strange to us, because of our different manner of expression, it will be helpful to quote these authorities. Grandmaison says:

The final term—blindness and perdition—is here enunciated in the Hebrew manner, as the object of a positive intention of God's part. The delicate distinctions (between that which God wills absolutely and that which He permits) with which a more profound analysis of the divine causality has made us familiar found no expression in Semitic languages. Everything that happened, happened because God had so decided, so decreed. But this way of speaking in no way implied the predestination to evil, and its inevitable consequences, that would at first seem to follow from the rigidity of the terms employed. Other phrases clearly implying freedom of human choice are found in conjunction with the former and enable us to interpret these correctly.<sup>12</sup>

Lagrange likewise says, in commenting on the words of Mark:

M. Loisy a dit très justement que le texte que nous allons aborder est une vue théologique. Qu'on l'interprète donc comme tel, et spécialement selon les lois de la théologie sémitique ou biblique. On constatera alors qu'il n'est point en désaccord avec les autres. Dans ce texte, Marc n'a plus en vue l'ordre d'exécution et pour ainsi dire normal des choses, mais l'ordre de prédestination dans les desseins de Dieu; non plus le caractère propre des éléments employés, mais leur résultat ultime, et, selon l'usage biblique, il a attribué aux desseins de Dieu toute efficacité, sans se mettre en peine de concilier en théologien cette efficacité avec le jeu des causes secondes et la responsabilité humaine.<sup>13</sup>

In the light of these statements, Charue's opinion is easily understood: "Il nous paraît, en effet, préférable d'interpréter *ἴνα* dans le cas présent, en fonction de la pensée juive."<sup>14</sup> In reference

<sup>12</sup> *Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, pp. 36, 37.

<sup>13</sup> "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 25.

<sup>14</sup> *L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, p. 140, n. 1. Cf. also page 139.

to Romans xi. 7, 8, Vosté says: "Hic, ut patet, caecitas et surditas tribuuntur directe actioni Iahveh, sicut apud Marcum referuntur ad Dominum. Rigor vero talium expressionum valde attenuatur attento genio linguae et theologiae Semitarum, qui non distinguunt—litterarie saltem—inter causalitatem strictam et meram sequelam aut permissionem." <sup>15</sup> Finally, let us quote Buzy:

Mais la remarque capitale en toute cette question nous est fournie par la théologie sémitique, laquelle n'a qu'une seule et même terminologie pour exprimer la *cause* et l'*occasion*, le *but* et le *résultat*. . . . Jésus s'exprimant dans les termes mêmes d'Isaïe, relève plus de la théologie sémitique que de la philologie grecque. Rien n'empêche donc plus que son *iva* se ramène, en définitive, à la signification d'un simple *ὥστε*, et il s'y ramène.<sup>16</sup>

Thus far our procedure has been: to indicate the peculiarity of expression according to which Semites sometimes express the permissive causality of God as His direct causality; to apply this principle in the interpretation of the Synoptic text we are presently considering; and to quote various authorities who explicitly defend this interpretation of the text. Now, this Semitic peculiarity of expression is found in many other texts of Scripture; and for the purpose of demonstrating the principle and proving its validity we will now refer to some of these texts.

In a number of Old Testament passages concerned with the exodus of the Jews from Egypt it is said that God "hardened" the heart of Pharaoh. For example, Exodus ix. 12 reads: "And the Lord hardened Pharaoh's heart. . . ." <sup>17</sup> Of course, the object of the hardening was that Pharaoh should not let the Jewish people leave

<sup>15</sup> *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 129.

<sup>16</sup> *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 268, 269. As we shall see very soon, Durand, Condamin, and Prat refer to this Semitic peculiarity of expression, and they use it in the interpretation of various texts in Scripture. However, they do not use it explicitly in reference to the text in Mark and Luke. It is worth noting also that, of the authors whom we have quoted, Grandmaison, Charue and Buzy hold the punishment theory. However, in the preceding chapter we pointed out that it is more correct to group them with the defenders of the pure mercy theory.

<sup>17</sup> The Hebrew text reads: וַיַּחֲזֶק יְהוָה אֶת־לֵב פַּרְעֹה. This is the text according to Kittel, *Biblica Hebraica*, 3d edition. All quotations that

Egypt. Even in the words that God addressed to Moses on the occasion when He appeared to him in Madian and commissioned him to lead the Jews back to the Promised Land, the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed directly to God: "... I shall harden his heart, and he will not let the people go" (Exodus v. 21). According to our way of speaking, these texts have only one meaning, namely, that God will directly bring about the hardening of Pharaoh's heart. According to our way of speaking there is no indication in these words of mere permission. But recall the situation. God, at the very time that He is using these words, is telling Moses to ask Pharaoh to allow the Jewish people to leave Egypt and go back to Palestine. Certainly, God would not tell Moses to ask Pharaoh to let the people leave Egypt and at the same time intend to harden Pharaoh's heart so that he would refuse Moses' request. The correct interpretation, therefore, is that God is merely foretelling to Moses that Pharaoh will not grant the request. Since God will permit Pharaoh to refuse, God is said, according to Semitic peculiarity of expression, to be the direct cause of the hardening of his heart. What God merely permits is expressed as if it were directly caused and intended by Him. Furthermore, there is strong confirmation of this interpretation in Scripture itself. There are texts where the hardening of Pharaoh's heart is attributed directly to Pharaoh himself—texts where Pharaoh is said to harden his own heart. Exodus viii. 15, for example, reads: "And Pharaoh seeing that rest was given, hardened his own heart, and did not hear them, as the Lord had commanded"; and 1 Kings vi. 6: "Why do you harden your hearts, as Egypt and Pharaoh hardened their hearts? . . ." <sup>18</sup>

The same commentary holds for those passages in Sacred Scripture where God is said to cause evil. It is true that God can cause

we shall hereafter make from the Hebrew will be taken from this edition of Kittel.

<sup>18</sup> Of Exodus ix. 12 Vosté says: "hoc non causative sed permissive dicitur." *Op. cit.*, p. 159. Both Vosté and Condamin use this same explanation for a very similar expression in Deuteronomy (ii. 30): "And Sehon the king of Hesebon would not let us pass: because the Lord thy God had hardened his spirit, and fixed his heart, that he might be delivered into thy hands, as now thou seest." Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 159; Condamin, *Le livre d'Isaïe*, pp. 45, 46.

physical evil directly; but He cannot directly cause or intend moral evil or sin. Such causality would be contrary to His infinite holiness. Yet, in some texts in Scripture evil is apparently attributed to the direct causality of God. We believe the reference in these texts is to moral evil, either because moral evil is explicitly mentioned or because evil is spoken of in an all-inclusive sense. Isaiah xlv. 7 reads: "I form the light, and create darkness; I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord that do all these things."<sup>19</sup> God is here said to create evil; and, since there are no restrictions in the statement, moral evil is apparently included. Psalm cxviii. (cxix.) 10 is more definite: "Do not lead me astray from thy commandments."<sup>20</sup> The supposition here is that God can cause moral evil. Almost the same idea is found in the text of the Our Father: "And lead us not into temptation. . . ." <sup>21</sup> The supposition here is that God can tempt one to sin. Again, Ezechiel xxxix. 7 reads: "I shall not cause my holy name to be profaned any more."<sup>22</sup> The supposition here is that God can directly cause His holy name to be profaned and that He has actually done so in the past. Briefly, all these passages, if interpreted according to our way of speaking, attribute moral evil to the direct causality and intention of God. But such an interpretation is excluded by the infinite holiness of God. The correct interpretation of these passages is that God permits moral evil at times. The text is to be interpreted according to Semitic modes of expression.<sup>23</sup>

This same principle is applied by Lagrange in the interpreta-

<sup>19</sup> . . . עשה שלום ובורא רע . . . .

<sup>20</sup> We have given the translation of the Hebrew original, which reads: אֶל תִּשְׁנֶנִּי מִמִּצְוֹתֶיךָ. In the light of the principle we are discussing, the correctness of the Douay version, " . . . let me not stray from thy commandments," is evident.

<sup>21</sup> καὶ ἡμᾶς εἰς πειρασμόν . . . (Matt. vi. 13).

<sup>22</sup> This is the translation of the Hebrew, which reads:

וְלֹא־אֶחֱלֶה אֶת־שְׁמִי קֹדֶשׁ עוֹד : The Douay version, " . . . my holy name shall be profaned no more . . ." is quite inexact.

<sup>23</sup> Both Vosté and Condamin interpret Psalm cxviii. (cxix.) 10 and Ezechiel xxxix. 7 according to the Semitic principle with which we are dealing. Cf. Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 159; Condamin, *op. cit.*, pp. 45, 46. Condamin interprets the Ezechiel text as follows: "Je ne laisserai plus profaner mon saint nom." Vosté

tion of a very famous passage in the New Testament. In the Sermon on the Mount, our Lord says: "You have heard that it was said: 'Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and shalt hate thy enemy' . . . (Matt. v. 43).<sup>24</sup> According to Lagrange, Christ is here referring partly to the teaching of the Law and partly to the traditional, rabbinic interpretation of the Law. The written Law really contained only the first part of the statement, i. e., "Thou shalt love thy neighbor." The rest of the statement, "and thou shalt hate thy enemy," was not in the Law but was a traditional interpretation of the Law. Now, if we insist on interpreting the words of our Lord in accordance with our way of speaking, Christ is here representing the tradition about hating one's enemy as a direct command; since the tradition is expressed in the same form as the command of loving one's neighbor. However, as Lagrange says, the tradition about hating one's enemy was merely a permission. The traditional interpretation of the Law permitted a person to hate his enemy under certain circumstances. Our conclusion, therefore, must be that Christ is not distinguishing in His expression between direct command and permission. He expresses both ideas in the same way, as direct command. Lagrange says:

Jesus, expressing His thought in a Semitic language—and Semitic language is barren of expressions for fine shades of meaning, using the same form in order to express what is of precept and what is merely tolerated—sums up in these words the current opinion of the time concerning the traditional teaching of the Law on the subject. . . . it is clear that it is His intention to oppose His own revelation to the false interpretation of the old revelation. His own revelation is based on what is expressly commanded in the Law, and He makes the formal precept of the Law concerning charity cover all the situations in which, according to the ancient dispensation, it was considered legitimate to hate certain enemies.<sup>25</sup>

interprets Psalm cxviii. (cxix.) 10: ". . . noli permittere ut discedam a mandatis tuis." Vosté paraphrases the text of the Our Father as follows: ". . . noli permittere ut inducamur et labamur in tentationem." He calls attention to the French reading of the prayer: ". . . et ne nous laissez pas tomber en tentation."

<sup>24</sup> Ἠκούσατε ὅτι ἐρρέθη· ἀγαπήσεις τὸν πλησίόν σου καὶ μισήσεις τὸν ἐχθρόν σου.

<sup>25</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 156.

Finally, there are two New Testament texts, closely related in meaning, that we may profitably consider here. In John ix. 39 Christ says: "For judgment have I come into this world, that they who do not see may see, and they who see may become blind."<sup>26</sup> An excellent commentary on this text is provided by a text in St. Matthew's Gospel (xi. 25): "I praise thee, Father, Lord of heaven and earth, that thou didst hide these things from the wise and prudent, and didst reveal them to little ones."<sup>27</sup> "They who see," in the first passage, are the "wise and prudent" of the second passage; and in both instances the reference is to the proud, the self-satisfied and the self-sufficient, notably the Pharisees and the other religious leaders of the Jewish nation. "They who do not see," in the first passage, are the "little ones," that is, those who are unlearned but who are meek and humble and docile. Now, according to our way of speaking, Christ says in the first text that He has come in order that the proud and learned may become blind, that is, in order that they may not accept His message. This blindness is expressed as the direct intention and wish of Christ. And it is important to notice that the reference is to the whole mission of Christ and not merely to a period of His ministry which would follow after a previous, deliberate and culpable rejection of His teaching. In the second text, likewise, God is said to hide His revelation from the "wise and prudent." It is a deliberate, purposeful holding back of His revelation from certain persons while, at the same time, He offers this revelation to others. Certainly, this is not the correct interpretation of the two texts. Christ came to exercise His mission of salvation for all. He came to direct His message to all His hearers. He wished the salvation of all His listeners, without any exception. The form of expression in the two texts, therefore, is to be explained according to Semitic peculiarity of expression. What God permits, even though it is against His antecedent will, is often expressed as if it were His direct intention and purpose. In this

<sup>26</sup> εἰς κρίμα ἐγὼ εἰς τὸν κόσμον τοῦτον ἦλθον, ἵνα οἱ μὴ βλέποντες βλέπωσιν καὶ οἱ βλέποντες τυφλοὶ γένωνται.

<sup>27</sup> Ἐξομολογοῦμαι σοι, πάτερ, Κύριε τοῦ οὐρανοῦ καὶ τῆς γῆς, ὅτι ἔκρυψας ταῦτα ἀπὸ σοφῶν καὶ συνετῶν, καὶ ἀπεκάλυψας αὐτὰ νηπίοις.

particular case God allows the proud to blind themselves and He allows the "wise and prudent" to disregard His revelation.<sup>28</sup>

The texts we have now mentioned are sufficient to demonstrate the Semitic habit of expression with which we are concerned. Moreover, it is obvious from what we have said thus far that the defenders of both opinions on the purpose of the parables are agreed as to the validity of this principle. It must be admitted, therefore, that this principle offers a possible explanation of the Synoptic text we are discussing in this chapter. In other words—and we are considering now only the Synoptic text taken by itself—it is possible that our Lord is expressing, not His purpose in using the parables, but rather the permitted result of the parables. Interpretation of the text according to the defenders of the justice theory is not the only possible interpretation. The text, taken in itself, is uncertain—it is capable of different interpretations. And now we can go further. It is a leading principle of biblical interpretation that if the meaning of a text is not certain from the text itself, the interpretation is to be sought in the context. By "context" here we mean both

<sup>28</sup> Skrinjar, who holds the justice theory, admits: "N.-S. était bien la lumière qui est venue dans ce monde, pour éclairer tous les hommes; et pourtant οἱ βλέποντες, c'est-à-dire ceux qui se croyaient intelligents et en étaient fiers, devaient être aveuglés par cette Lumière, tandis que οἱ μὴ βλέποντες, les humbles et les petits, méprisés par les Pharisiens (cf. Ioh. vii. 49) et ignorants à leurs propres yeux, devaient devenir les dépositaires des grandes vérités que le Fils de Dieu est venu révéler au monde (cf. Matt. xi. 25; Lc. x. 21)." "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1930 (11), pp. 432, 433.

Durand interprets the text of John in accordance with Semitic expression. Cf. "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), col. 760. The same interpretation is to be applied to the words of Simeon: "Behold, this child is destined for the fall and for the rise of many in Israel . . ." (Luke ii. 34). As Vosté says, referring to the fruitless results of the parables as far as most of Christ's hearers were concerned: "At haec sunt *per accidens* tam quoad parabolarum naturam, quam quoad intentionem Christi, qui *per se*, parabolis utens, intendit quam aptius revelare veram naturam Regni Dei atque salvare oves quae perierunt domus Israel; idem est Iesus, seu Salvator, qui positus est in ruina et in resurrectionem multorum: in resurrectionem quidem per gratiam suam seu per se, in ruina vero per accidens propter malas dispositiones recipientium." *Op. cit.*, p. 162.

the immediate context and the remote context or the rest of the message of Scripture.<sup>29</sup> As one author has expressed this principle of biblical exegesis: "It is well to realize from the outset that there are passages in Holy Writ, many of them, that are intrinsically obscure. . . . Not infrequently these obscure passages find their explanation, if not in the same Book or the same Testament, at least in another Book or the other Testament. The best explanation of the Bible is the Bible. . . ." <sup>30</sup> The meaning of the Synoptic passage, therefore, is to be sought in the message of the rest of Scripture and especially in the contents of the Gospels. We believe that the context shows that the mercy theory interpretation of the Synoptic passage is the only acceptable interpretation.

The justice theory of the purpose of the parables is opposed to what the Gospels tell us about the character and mission of Christ.<sup>31</sup> Consider, first, that the justice theory represents Christ in the role of judge. He is a judge who metes out a just punishment of rejection upon the people who have refused to profit by His previous teaching. This role of judge, we believe, is not in accord with the picture of Christ that is presented to us in the four Gospels.

On one occasion the Pharisees brought to Christ a woman who had been taken in adultery. They asked Him whether she should be stoned to death as the Law required. Our Lord refused to judge or condemn her. Apparently she was guilty; and our Lord did not deny that she deserved the penalty that the Law prescribed. But He showed by His whole manner of acting that He had no desire to act as her judge. "He does not consider that He is called upon to pass judgment at all; He has not come as an official of a court of justice charged with the duty of giving sentence in accordance with

<sup>29</sup> It is worth noting that Maldonatus himself refers to this principle of biblical exegesis in his discussion of the purpose of the parables. The result is that he practically withdraws his adherence to the justice theory. Confer, in the previous chapter, our discussion of his modification of the justice theory.

<sup>30</sup> J. Morgan, "The Study and Teaching of the New Testament," *New Testament*, pp. 326, 327.

<sup>31</sup> In reference to Christ's words in the Synoptic text, W. J. Moulton says: "There is, in any case, too much contradictory evidence to admit of our receiving them as the deliberate statement of Jesus' intention." "Parable," *HDCG*, Vol. II, p. 316.

the law, but to invite sinners to ward off God's judgments by repentance."<sup>32</sup> After cleverly discomfiting the Pharisees, Christ said to the woman: "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned thee? . . . Neither will I condemn thee. Go thy way, and from now on sin no more" (John viii. 10, 11).

On another occasion the people of Samaria refused hospitality to Christ and His disciples. James and John were indignant. They thought that the Samaritans should be punished. "Lord, wilt thou that we bid fire come down from heaven and consume them?" (Luke ix. 54). But Christ was not of their mind. He rebuked them. "You do not know of what manner of spirit you are; for the Son of Man did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them" (Luke ix. 55, 56).

Christ, then, while He was on earth, was not a judge, but a merciful Savior.<sup>33</sup> As He Himself said: "For God did not send His Son into the world in order to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through him" (John iii. 17); and again: "For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost" (Luke xix. 10). Accordingly, Christ often pronounced sinners absolved from their sins. He was ready to forgive even those who were guilty of repeated offenses—even those whose offenses were repeated innumerable times. Peter asked our Lord: "Lord, how often shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? Up to seven times?" (Matt. xviii. 21). Our Lord answered: "I do not say to thee seven times, but seventy times seven" (Matt. xviii. 22).<sup>34</sup> On another occasion Christ repeated this teaching in almost the same words:

<sup>32</sup> Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 301.

<sup>33</sup> Cf. also Luke xii. 14. Charue: "En résumé, Jésus ne montre que de la miséricorde. La justice est servie par toute l'économie providentielle, dont le secret est auprès de Dieu, et à laquelle le Christ, comme homme, ne peut rien." *Op. cit.*, p. 144. Cf. also, Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 163.

<sup>34</sup> "Ought one to go on forgiving as often as seven times? To go beyond that number seemed too much to ask; for if a man continued to offend again and again after having been forgiven so many times, he would seem to be indulging in mere mockery, and it surely was not right to take part in such a farce. But God's mercy is infinite; He never wearies of forgiving. Therefore Peter must forgive seventy times seven times, that is to say, always." Lagrange, *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 286.

"Take heed to yourselves. If thy brother sin, rebuke him; and if he repent, forgive him. And if seven times in the day he sin against thee, and seven times in the day turn back to thee, saying, 'I repent,' forgive him" (Luke xvii. 3, 4).

This was the teaching of Christ—forgiveness of offenses, even though the offense be repeated innumerable times. And Christ, we know, gave perfect example of the lessons He taught. As He was hanging from the cross, suffering and dying for the salvation of the souls of all men, He turned to the thief who had often disregarded the commandments, and He said to him: "Amen I say to thee, this day thou shalt be with me in paradise" (Luke xxiii. 43). Even more—while Christ was suffering His last agony on the cross, He prayed for the forgiveness of all the sins that had been committed against Him. And there had been many sins. There were the many and repeated sins of rejection of His teaching; and there was the final, great sin of condemning Him to death. But Christ forgave all these sins, and He asked His heavenly Father to forgive them also: "Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing" (Luke xxiii. 34).<sup>35</sup>

It is true, of course, that Christ had the power to judge.<sup>36</sup> And true also that He would one day exercise that power. But He chose to reserve the role of judge to the last day, to the day of judgment. "But when the Son of Man shall come in his majesty, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on the throne of his glory; and before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate them one from another, as the shepherd separates the sheep from the goats; and he will set the sheep on his right hand, but the goats on the left" (Matt. xxv. 31-33). The same truth is found in another passage. The inhabitants of Bethsaida, Corozain, and Capharnaum had been guilty of rejecting Christ. They had rejected Him in spite of His many attempts to convert them and in spite of the many miracles He had performed in their midst. For this sin, Christ says, they will be punished. But notice when the condemna-

<sup>35</sup> Greek manuscript evidence is divided on the authenticity of Luke xxiii. 34.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. John v. 22, 23: "For neither does the Father judge any man, but all judgment he has given to the Son, . . ."

tion is to be made and when the punishment is to be inflicted—on the last day, on the day of judgment.

Woe to thee, Corozain! woe to thee, Bethsaida! For if in Tyre and Sidon had been worked the miracles that have been worked in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon on the day of judgment than for you. And thou, Capharnaum, shalt thou be exalted to heaven? Thou shalt be thrust down to hell! For if the miracles had been worked in Sodom that have been worked in thee, it would have remained to this day. But I tell you, it will be more tolerable for the land of Sodom on the day of judgment than for thee (Matt. xi. 20-24).

Christ, then, as long as He was on earth, was not a judge but a merciful Savior. He reserved the role of judge for the last day, the day of judgment itself. The justice theory of the parables, since it involves a judgment and condemnation of the people by Christ during the course of His public ministry, must be rejected.

In a more particular way the justice theory is opposed to what the Gospels tell us of the mission of Christ to the Jews. The justice theory maintains that Christ rejected the Jewish people, at least in part, during the course of His public ministry. The Gospel teaching contradicts this idea. The Gospels show that Christ's mission was devoted exclusively to the Jewish people and that He carried on this mission until the very end of His life.

Recall the occasion when the Syro-Phoenician woman asked Christ to cure her daughter. At first our Lord refused; and He gave as His reason: "I was not sent except to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. xv. 24). A moment later He repeated the same reason, this time using a different figure: "It is not fair to take the children's bread and to cast it to the dogs" (Matt. xv. 26). Christ clearly implies in these words that His mission is to be devoted exclusively to the Jewish people.

Again, when Christ sent His apostles on their first mission, He said to them: "Do not go in the direction of the Gentiles, nor enter the towns of Samaritans; but go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel" (Matt. x. 5, 6). The only conclusion that can be drawn

from these words is that the mission of the Apostles, in the beginning, is to be exclusively to the Jews. It was only after Christ's death and resurrection that He entrusted a universal mission to His Apostles. "Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you" (Matt. xxviii. 19, 20).<sup>37</sup>

Not only was Christ's mission devoted exclusively to the Jews; He carried on this mission until the very end of His life.<sup>38</sup> The following words, which Christ spoke toward the close of His life, presuppose a long, repeated, and continued effort on His part to convert the Jewish people: "Jerusalem, Jerusalem! thou who killest the prophets, and stonest those who are sent to thee! How often would I have gathered thy children together, as a hen gathers her young under her wings, but thou wouldst not! . . ." (Matt. xxiii. 37). Knox therefore says, in reference to the gardener in the parable of the Fig-tree (Luke xiii. 6-9).<sup>39</sup>

<sup>37</sup> Even after the death of Christ, it seems that the Apostles were to direct their efforts first toward the conversion of the Jews. The text of Acts i. 8—and these words were spoken by Christ just before His ascension, as the succeeding two verses show—reads: ". . . you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit comes upon you, and you shall be witnesses for me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and even to the very ends of the earth." These words can easily be interpreted to mean that the first efforts of the Apostles were to be directed to the conversion of the Jews in Palestine. Furthermore, there is a well-founded tradition that the Apostles retained Jerusalem as their headquarters for twelve years after the death of Christ. Probably they did not even leave Palestine during that time. Again, it is a fact that St. Paul, the apostle to the Gentiles, always and in every place endeavored first to convert the Jews. Cf. also Lagrange, "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 12.

<sup>38</sup> We have had occasion to note several times that Christ took precautions to prevent the period of His public ministry from being foreshortened by His enemies. For example, we have referred to the agreement of the defenders of both the justice and the mercy theories that the obscurity of the parables served as a protection against the Pharisees (chap. 5, note 25). Again, we know that on a number of occasions our Lord had to thwart actual attempts on His life. Cf., e. g., John viii. 20; viii. 59; Luke iv. 30.

<sup>39</sup> The text of the parable reads: "A certain man had a fig tree planted in his vineyard; and he came seeking fruit thereon, and found none. And he said

I think there can be little doubt that this gardener is our Lord in his Sacred Humanity, pleading to his Father for the people of the Old Covenant. What effort did he spare to effect that purpose? What avenue of repentance did he not open to his rebellious subjects? And he pleaded for them to the last: "Abba, Father, all things are possible to thee; remove this chalice from me." Was there no thought there for Judas, no thought there for his persecutors, whose torches even now glimmered among the trees in the distance?—surely the gardener of the parable is the Gardener who watched in Gethsemane.<sup>40</sup>

The mission of Christ, then, was devoted exclusively to the Jews, and He carried on that mission until the very end of His life. This Gospel teaching is opposed to the justice theory of the parables, since that theory maintains that Christ rejected the Jewish people, at least in part, during the course of His public ministry. Therefore, in a general way, the character and mission of Christ as merciful Savior and His refusal to assume the role of judge, and, in a more particular way, the fact that His mission was devoted exclusively and perseveringly to the Jewish people, are opposed to the justice theory. The consequence is that the mercy theory interpretation of the Synoptic passage is the only acceptable interpretation. To resume—considering only the text itself, we saw that the mercy theory interpretation was a possible interpretation; in the light of the context, it is the only acceptable interpretation.<sup>41</sup>

to the vine-dresser, 'Behold, for three years now I have come seeking fruit on this fig tree, and I find none. Cut it down, therefore; why does it still encumber the ground?' But he answered him and said, 'Sir, let it alone this year, too, till I dig around it and manure it. Perhaps it may bear fruit; but if not, then afterwards thou shalt cut it down.'

<sup>40</sup> *The Mystery of the Kingdom*, p. 64.

<sup>41</sup> Buzy discusses the character and mission of Christ as portrayed in the Synoptics (pp. 338-342). He confines his study particularly to the Gospel of St. Mark, but notes that the three Synoptics present the same portrait. He says: "On a beau se borner à l'étude de saint Marc,—qui du reste est ici complètement en harmonie avec les deux autres Synoptiques,—la journée des Parables ne marque pas une solution de continuité dans la miséricorde, pas un découragement, pas une hésitation dans la bonté du Maître. . . . Nous le répétons, tout l'Évangile est celui d'un Sauveur, d'un Rédempteur. On n'y

In all the foregoing discussion on the meaning of the Synoptic text we have been presupposing that the passage expresses purpose.<sup>42</sup> We have presupposed that Christ's words, interpreted according to our way of speaking, express His intention of preventing the people from understanding His message. We then proceeded to explain that the passage is to be interpreted according to Semitic peculiarity of expression. Now, this presupposition—that the passage indicates purpose according to our way of speaking—is in accordance with the ordinary meaning of ἵνα, the particle used in the text of Mark. "... all

trouve ni une parole, ni un acte qui veuille augmenter le désordre moral, épaissir l'intelligence, ou endurcir les bonnes volontés. La comparaison entre les trois chapitres de saint Marc qui précèdent la journée des paraboles et les chapitres qui la suivent, est décisive." Cf. also Lebreton, *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, I, 242, 248; Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, II, 35.

<sup>42</sup> Lagrange believes that ἵνα in the text of Mark has a pregnant meaning and is equivalent to ἵνα πληρωθῇ: "On reconnaît que l'intention de citer étant évidente, ἵνα est presque l'équivalent de ἵνα πληρωθῇ, 'afin que s'accomplisse,' comme l'a compris Mt. en restituant la citation précédée de ἀναπληροῦται αὐτοῖς ἡ προφητεία Ἡσαίου ἡ λέγουσα, 'et l'on voit s'accomplir en eux la prophétie d'Isaïe, qui dit. . . .' Les rabbins citaient souvent l'Écriture sans le dire." "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), pp. 28, 29. It is important to add, however, that, Lagrange does not mean to weaken the force of the text by this interpretation: "Cela est noté pour la précision, car je ne cherche pas du tout à esquiver la force du texte. Que Jésus ait dit comme dans Mt.: La prophétie d'Isaïe s'accomplit donc, ou, en accentuant la finalité et le but, comme dans Mc.: la disposition divine avait pour but . . . c'est au fond la même chose, puisque la prophétie typique ne pouvait être frustrée. En l'inspirant, Dieu se proposait un dessein qui devait infailliblement se réaliser."

In reference to the words of the prophet Isaias and the nature of the prophecy, Jacquier quotes Camerlynck: "Hoc Isaiæ oraculum . . . sensu litterali refertur ad antiquos Judaeos, Isaiæ aequales. A Christo autem et ab Apostolo ad Judaeos contumaces suae aetatis, qui majorum malitiam imitabantur, merito accommodatum fuit; nimirum sensu typical, ut videtur, quatenus veteres Judaei perversi figuram quamdam seu typum prae se ferunt, cujus antitypus in Judaeis impiis tempore Christi exprimitur." *Les Actes des Apôtres*, p. 760.

Lagrange's interpretation of the ἵνα in Mark, as being equivalent to ἵνα πληρωθῇ, is approved by Buzy, Prado, and Vosté. Cf. Buzy, *op. cit.*, p. 268; Prado, *Praelectionum Biblicarum Compendium: Novum Testamentum*, p. 251; Vosté, *op. cit.*, Vol. I, p. 125.

things are treated in parables, that (ἵνα) 'Seeing they may see, but not perceive; and hearing they may hear, but not understand; . . . ' (Mark iv. 11, 12). ἵνα ordinarily indicates purpose or intention. However, some authors maintain that this presupposition is unwarranted. They maintain that ἵνα does not indicate purpose in this particular passage. They say that even in expression the passage does not have the idea of purpose. They say that ἵνα is sometimes used in the New Testament to indicate result, and that this passage in the Synoptics is an instance of the ecbatic use of ἵνα. Christ, therefore, even in His expression is merely making a prediction. He is foretelling the fruitless results of the parable teaching.<sup>43</sup>

<sup>43</sup> Several authors consider the question whether this Synoptic text wherein Christ apparently expresses the purpose of the kingdom parables is really in its proper chronological place. In other words, did Christ actually make this statement when He first began to use the kingdom parables, or did He make the statement only on a later occasion? We have already discussed two other questions of chronological significance: (1) whether the group of eight kingdom parables were all originally delivered on the same occasion, or whether they were collected by St. Matthew (cf. chap. 1); and (2) whether the Gospels give evidence of the incredulity of the people prior to the use of the parables at the lake-side (cf. chap. 5). The comments made in reference to these two questions have a bearing on this question also, since in all three cases there is question of the correctness of the chronological order of the Gospels.

Buzy concludes his consideration of the present question (pp. 243-247) with these remarks: "Pour le moment, retenons cette double conclusion: le logion semble bien n'avoir pas été dit à cette place par Jésus; néanmoins on est fondé à croire qu'il appartient à cette période du ministère public. Nous sommes heureux de lire la première partie de cette conclusion sous la plume de plusieurs exégètes." *Op. cit.*, pp. 245, 246. Mangelot likewise prefers the opinion that the declaration of Christ is not in its proper place; but he does not venture to say when it was that Christ actually made this statement. Cf. *Les Évangiles synoptiques*, pp. 241, 242. Huby likewise says, in reference to the passage as it is found in St. Mark's Gospel: "La question des disciples et la réponse de Jésus semblent placées ici par anticipation. La fin du chapitre IV (v. 35) suppose que Jésus n'a pas quitté la barque d'où il enseignait la foule. Or le présent épisode réclame un autre cadre: . . . C'est donc, semble-t-il, par une combinaison rédactionnelle que saint Marc a rattaché à la parabole du Semeur cette demande d'explication." *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 90. Prat: "Ce n'est pas le jour des paraboles mais assez longtemps après, lorsqu'ils

Prat supports the interpretation of *iva* as indicating result in this passage. He says: "... Quoi qu'il en soit, la particule *iva*, n'étant pas précédée d'un verbe de volonté—tel que décréter, commander, désirer, prier, exhorter, etc.—ne saurait exprimer une finalité proprement dite; il ne peut exprimer que la conséquence logique, l'aboutissement naturel du fait signalé. . . ." <sup>44</sup> Again he says, in reference to the text in Mark and Luke: "Jésus n'explique pas *pourquoi* il se sert des paraboles, car on ne le lui demande pas; mais il expose aux disciples étonnés de l'incrédulité de la foule les *divers effets* de la parabole évangélique sur des auditeurs diversement disposés." <sup>45</sup> Buzy, while maintaining that *iva* does not have the ecbatic sense in this Synoptic passage, <sup>46</sup> nevertheless defends its ecbatic use in other places in the New Testament. On the latter question he says:

Si cette question se posait devant le grec attique, on répondrait sans hésiter que *iva* n'est certainement pas ὥστε, qu'il a le sens causal, *afin que*, non le sens ecbatique, *de sorte que*. Mais

en eurent constaté par expérience le peu de fruit et d'efficacité, que les apôtres posèrent leur question." *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 339.

Even if a definite answer could be given on this question, we do not think that such a determination would lend much support to either the justice or the mercy theory.

<sup>44</sup> "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 211, note.

<sup>45</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 211. Prado admits the ecbatic use of *iva* in the Synoptic passage. Cf. *Novum Testamentum* (Praellectionum Biblicarum Compendium), p. 251. Vosté quotes Cajetan and St. Thomas in support of the ecbatic interpretation. Cf. Vosté, *op. cit.*, p. 126. However, there are two considerations which weaken the force of the testimony of St. Thomas and Cajetan: (1) They are considering not *iva*, but the Latin "ut," which regularly expresses result as well as purpose; (2) They include in their interpretation of the particle the idea of the fulfillment of the prophecy of Isaías. Now the precise way in which this second consideration weakens the force of their testimony will become more evident from the quotations we shall soon adduce from Blass-Debrunner, Bauer, and other grammarians and lexicographers in regard to *iva* in expressions of divine causality.

<sup>46</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 267, 268. Fonck and Lagrange also definitely reject the ecbatic interpretation of *iva* in this Synoptic passage. Cf. Fonck, *The Parables of the Gospel*, p. 37; Lagrange, "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910, p. 28.

tout le monde sait que, dans la κοινή, et en particulier dans la langue néo-testamentaire, cette distinction n'est plus de beaucoup aussi tranchée; tout en gardant le plus souvent la signification classique, ἵνα et ὥστε empiètent l'un sur l'autre, le premier signifiant parfois *de sorte que* ou simplement *que* et le deuxième *afin que*.<sup>47</sup>

Exegetes who wish to interpret ἵνα in the ecbatic sense, find considerable support among the grammarians and lexicographers. It must be added, however, that there is much disagreement among the authorities on this point. Thus, Robertson says:

It is debatable whether ἵνα has the ecbatic use in the New Testament. There is in itself no reason why it should not have it, since undoubtedly it was so used in the later Greek. . . . There is not space to follow the long debate in the grammars and commentaries on this subject. . . . It is argued that where ἵνα seems to be used in a consecutive clause, it is the divine purpose that is to be considered. But. . . .<sup>48</sup>

Robertson then cites various passages from the New Testament to show that ἵνα has the ecbatic sense even where the divine purpose cannot be used in explanation. He concludes: "So, then, we conclude that ἵνα has in the New Testament all three uses (final, sub-final, consecutive), and thus runs a close parallel with the infinitive which it finally displaced."<sup>49</sup> Moulton-Milligan, in the "Vocabulary of the Greek Testament," also explicitly state that ἵνα has the ecbatic sense in the New Testament. They refer to particular texts and add the testimony of extra-Biblical sources for the ecbatic use of ἵνα.<sup>50</sup> Blass-Debrunner and Bauer also defend this ecbatic use

<sup>47</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 267.

<sup>48</sup> *A Grammar of the Greek Testament*, pp. 997, 998.

<sup>49</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 999.

<sup>50</sup> *Vocabulary of the Greek Testament*, p. 305. Moulton and Milligan refer to the commentary of Sanday and Headlam on the Epistle to the Romans. In reference to Romans xi. 11 Sanday and Headlam say: ". . . it is quite clear that it is only by reading into passages a great deal which is not expressed that commentators can make ἵνα in all cases mean 'in order that.' . . . We cannot here any more than elsewhere read in a Divine purpose where it is neither implied nor expressed, merely for the sake of defending an arbitrary grammatical rule." *The Epistle to the Romans*, p. 321.

of ἵνα in the New Testament. In their discussions they include observations that have reference to the Semitic peculiarity of thought and expression that we have already discussed at some length. In recounting the various uses of ἵνα in the New Testament, Blass-Debrunner say:

. . . 5. Für den Infinitiv der Folge, kann, wie auch sonst wohl bei Spätern ἵνα eintreten, aber schwerlich bei eigentlich tatsächlicher Folge; z. B. . . . An einigen der genannten neutestamentlichen Stellen ist freilich die Möglichkeit einer rein finalen Auffassung nicht zu leugnen, so L. ix. 45; 2 Cor. i. 17; noch wahrscheinlicher est finale Auffassung in dem öftern ἵνα πληρωθῇ ("damit nach Gottes Ratschluss"), wie denn überhaupt die jüdische Teleologie bei der Verwischung des Unterschieds zwischen Absicht und Folge mitgewirkt haben wird. . . .<sup>51</sup>

Speaking likewise of the various uses of ἵνα in the New Testament, Bauer says:

. . . 2. als Ersatz für den Infinitiv der Folge, wenn die Folge bloss gedacht, nicht wirklich eingetreten ist. Doch ist diese Grenze nicht überall streng innegehalten. . . . In vielen Fällen ist Absicht und Folge nicht streng geschieden und daher mit ἵνα die Folge als der Absicht des Subjects oder Gottes entsprechend bezeichnet. Besonders bei göttlichen Willensentscheidungen ist wie im jüdischen Denken Absicht und Erfolg identisch: Lk. 11, 50; J. 4, 36; 12, 40; 19, 28; Ro. 5, 20; 7, 13; 8, 17; 11, 31f. und öfters. Auch die Formel ἵνα πληρωθῇ ist so zu verstehen; denn in der Heilsökonomie Gottes ist die Erfüllung beabsichtigt: Mt. 1, 22; 2, 15; . . .<sup>52</sup>

These quotations show that those exegetes who wish to defend the ecbatic sense of ἵνα in the Synoptic passage are able to muster considerable support from the grammarians and lexicographers. As we have already pointed out, the force of this interpretation is that

<sup>51</sup> *Grammatik des Neutestamentlichen Griechisch*, No. 391, p. 217.

<sup>52</sup> *Griechisch-Deutsches Wörterbuch zu den Schriften des Neuen Testaments und der Übrigen Urchristlichen Literatur*, col. 627. Thayer rejects the ecbatic use of ἵνα in the New Testament. Cf. *Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament*, p. 304.

Christ is directly and even in expression indicating the fruitless results of His teaching.<sup>53</sup>

Up to this point in our discussion we have been considering only the form of the text as it is found in Mark and Luke. It is this reading of the text on which the justice theory relies principally for support. Nevertheless, the text as it is found in St. Matthew's Gospel is also used in support of the justice theory. Therefore we must now turn our attention to the first Gospel.

First, let us consider in what respect the text of Matthew differs from that of the other two Synoptics. Vosté expresses the difference in these words:

Secundum Matthaeum igitur Dominus loquitur turbae in parabolis, QUIA videntes non vident: praecedens culpanda caecitas est causa usus parabolarum et inde sequentis maioris caecitatis. —Secundum Marcum vero et Lucam Dominus dicitur uti parabolis, UT videntes non videant: usu parabolarum Dominus Ipse intenderet caecitatem populi. Ipse vellet caecitatem; et ut hanc caecitatem efficiat, uteretur parabolis. Saltem talis videtur sensus prima facie. . . .

<sup>53</sup> Besides the two interpretations of the *lva* of Mark in the sense of purpose and result still another meaning is sometimes proposed, viz., the meaning of "because" (ὅτι). This interpretation would bring the text of Mark and Luke into closer harmony with that of Matthew. Cf. Matt. xiii. 13. This interpretation is defended by Lesêtre ("Parabole," *DDL*B, Vol. IV, col. 2213), and by La Cava (cf. Holzmeister's review of La Cava's two brochures: "*Ut videntes non videant.*" *Il motivo e lo scopo delle parabole nel Vangelo*; Rome, 1934; and "*Ne quando convertantur.*" *Lettera al M.R.P. Lagrange sullo scopo delle parabole*; Rome, 1935; in *BI*, 1936, pp. 512-514). Fonck, Skrinjar, Windisch and Holzmeister explicitly reject this interpretation of the *lva* of Mark in the sense of "because." Cf. Fonck, *The Parables of the Gospel*, p. 37; Skrinjar, "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1930 (11), p. 439; Windisch, "Die Verstockungsidee in Mc. 4:12 und das kausale *lva* der späteren Koine," *Zeitschrift für die Neutestamentliche Wissenschaft*, 1927 (26), pp. 203-209; Holzmeister, *BI*, 1936, pp. 512-514.

In criticism, let it suffice for us to say that if *lva* were to have this meaning in the Synoptic text, the remarks we are about to make about the text in Matthew, would hold good also for such an interpretation of the text in Mark and Luke.

Habetur igitur completa inversio effectum inter et causam apud Matthaeum ex una parte aliosque Synopticos ex altera parte.<sup>54</sup>

Prat likewise says, referring to the text of Matthew: "S'il y a une chose évidente, c'est que la finalité des paraboles, telle qu'elle est énoncée ici, ne concerne pas l'avenir mais seulement le passé; en d'autres termes, Jésus Christ n'exprime pas *le but* qu'il se propose en adoptant l'enseignement parabolique, mais bien *le motif* ou *l'un des motifs* qui le poussent à employer ce genre de prédication."<sup>55</sup>

Various authors use this text of Matthew in support of their opinion on the purpose of the parables. Skrinjar, for example, who also interprets Mark and Luke in support of the justice theory, says in reference to the text in Matthew: "Seulement d'après son texte, l'audition stérile serait le péché déjà commis par la foule contre la lumière. Le châtiment s'ensuit: c'est la soustraction du don de connaître les mystères du Royaume, laquelle sera exécutée en partie par un enseignement moins clair, par l'enseignement parabolique."<sup>56</sup>

Buzy finds, not additional confirmation, but the main support of his punishment theory in the text of Matthew. In this respect his opinion is rather unusual. We have already noted that Buzy interprets the text of Mark in accordance with Semitic peculiarity of expression—the interpretation which we ourselves have preferred. In the text of Mark Buzy finds neither the purpose nor the motive of the use of the parables expressed. He finds there only the following ideas: that the parables are an obscure teaching in comparison with the more direct teaching accorded the disciples; and that the result of the parables will be the lack of understanding of the people. In summarizing the meaning of the passage in Mark, he says:

D'un mot, voici le sens que nous découvrons dans ce fameux logion: tandis que le mystère du Royaume de Dieu est manifesté aux disciples, nous a dit le Sauveur, tout se passe en paraboles pour la foule; c'est donc que l'enseignement parabolique qu'il lui donne est *inférieur au moins sous le rapport de la clarté*; c'est un genre *voilé* et, par suite, *incomplet*, qui aura *pour résultat* de jeter la multitude dans un état bien pire que le précédent.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 124.

<sup>55</sup> "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 210.

<sup>56</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 439.

<sup>57</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 269.

Nevertheless, Buzy says, it still remains possible to interpret the text of Mark in the sense of punishment. We may interpret in this sense the relative obscurity there mentioned. The text, Buzy admits, does not explicitly affirm such a punishment, but it can be so interpreted. Moreover, in the final analysis, this interpretation is actually required by the text of Matthew, which shows definitely that the obscurity is a punishment. Buzy summarizes his argument in these words; referring to the text of Mark and Luke:

Tous les deux, nous l'avons montré, *inaugurent* à la journée du lac, la méthode parabolique; tous les deux, nous le prouverons tout à l'heure, ne produisent dans les paraboles qu'une doctrine *intentionnellement incomplète*. Il nous a paru que la meilleure explication de ces faits était encore de dire que pour ces deux synoptiques aussi les paraboles sont tout d'abord un châtement. Ce n'est pas le logion de saint Marc, iv, 11-12, qui s'oppose à cette interprétation, puisque, ainsi qu'on l'a vu, ces versets s'accroissent aussi bien d'un châtement tempéré que d'une miséricorde sans mélange. Or, si cette interprétation est *possible*, elle *s'impose*: d'abord pour les raisons déjà dites; ensuite parce qu'elle harmonise admirablement saint Marc et saint Luc avec saint Matthieu, et que, lorsqu'une conciliation de ce genre se présente avec toutes les garanties d'une solution rationnelle et satisfaisante, on n'a pas le droit de lui préférer une autre exégèse dont le seul avantage serait de créer entre les évangélistes des antilogies irréductibles.<sup>58</sup>

It can readily be seen from this summary statement of Buzy's position that his punishment theory rests on the text of St. Matthew. It is in the first Gospel that he finds the actual reference to the previous fault of the people and to the use of the kingdom parables as a punishment for this fault. Naturally, we cannot repeat here Buzy's entire discussion of the text of Matthew.<sup>59</sup> However, we think that his comments on verse 13 give a fair indication of his argument. This verse reads: "This is why I speak to them in parables, because (ὅτι) seeing they do not see and hearing they do not

<sup>58</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 368.

<sup>59</sup> Buzy's treatment of the text of Matthew is found on pp. 271-277, 367, 368.

hear, neither do they understand." Buzy says of this verse: "Ce *ὅτι* marque derechef entre le premier membre de phrase et le second, un rapport très étroit d'effet à cause: les paraboles sont manifestement appelées par les mauvaises dispositions de la foule, elles en sont le châtement."<sup>60</sup>

We believe that Buzy's interpretation of this verse is incorrect. In our argument to prove this point we shall use the same procedure that we employed in the interpretation of the text of St. Mark's Gospel. First we shall show that—considering just the text itself—there is a mercy theory interpretation that must be admitted to be acceptable. Then we shall prove that this mercy theory interpretation is the only acceptable interpretation in the light of the rest of the Gospel message.

This verse of St. Matthew's Gospel can be interpreted to mean that Christ's teaching in parables is an accommodation to the capacity of His listeners. The verse reads: "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand." The lofty nature of Christ' message about the kingdom, combined with the opposed Messianic ideas of the people, constituted a difficulty for His listeners. The difficulty was so great that it could properly be described as rendering the people blind and deaf to a clear and direct teaching about the kingdom of God. And Christ actually used this figure of blindness and deafness when He said in this verse: "... seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand." Because of this defect in spiritual vision and perception Christ resolved to present His teaching about the kingdom in a gradual revelation; and He declared that the parables were an element in this gradual revelation when He said: "This is why I speak to them in parables, because. . . ." This verse 13 in St. Matthew's Gospel is therefore to be paraphrased as follows: I speak to the people in parables because they are not capable of understanding a clear and direct teaching on the kingdom; they are blind and deaf as far as a clear and direct Messianic teaching is concerned. Such an interpretation of the verse—considering just the wording of the text itself—must be admitted to be a possible and acceptable interpretation.

<sup>60</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 368.

This acceptable interpretation becomes the only correct interpretation when the text is viewed in the light of the rest of the Gospel message. We need not repeat here all that we said previously when we spoke of the bearing of the Gospel message on the interpretation of the Synoptic passage as it is found in Mark and Luke. It will suffice for us merely to recall several propositions that we considered at that time: (1) that Christ's role on earth was not at all that of Judge but that of merciful Savior, and that He carried on His mission of salvation exclusively and perseveringly for the Jewish people: (2) that it is difficult to prove from the Gospel records that the Jews showed themselves incredulous and rejected Christ's preaching prior to the teaching at the lakeside. In addition, there is a text in the Gospel of St. Mark that has an important bearing on this particular verse in St. Matthew's Gospel. The text in Mark reads: "And in many such parables he spoke the word to them, according as they were able to understand it; . . ." (Mark iv. 33).<sup>61</sup> The natural interpretation of these words is that Christ in His use of parables was adapting His message to the intellectual capacity of His listeners. He spoke to them "according as they were able to understand. . . ." In other words, He imparted to them a gradual revelation in parable form, because they were not able to understand a clear and direct teaching on the kingdom. We think, therefore, that these words in Mark, ". . . according as they were able to understand," and the words of Christ in St. Matthew's Gospel, ". . . because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand," express the same thought.

The interpretation of Mark iv. 33 which we have just given, and which we have used in the interpretation of Matthew xiii. 13, is supported by many commentators. Prat, for example, says that Mark iv. 33 is to be interpreted "dans le sens d'une condescendance

<sup>61</sup> Καὶ τοιαύταις παραβολαῖς πολλαῖς ἐλάλει αὐτοῖς τὸν λόγον, καθὼς ἠδύναντο ἀκοῦειν. These words of St. Mark are found immediately after the parable of the Seed that grows of itself and the parable of the Mustard Seed (vv. 26-33), and in the same chapter with the parable of the Sower (vv. 3-9). These three parables are all included in the group of eight kingdom parables. Consequently, it cannot be doubted that verse 33 applies, at least in large part, to the parables of the kingdom.

divine.”<sup>62</sup> He says that Christ’s mercy here consists “à ne leur distribuer la lumière que dans la mesure où leurs yeux malades peuvent la supporter.”<sup>63</sup> Lagrange says: “Au vers 33, il est dit expressément que Jésus se conformait à la capacité de ses auditeurs καθὼς ἡδύναντο ἀκούειν, ce qui n’indique nullement une mauvaise disposition morale. En présence d’une mauvaise disposition réfléchie, la seule attitude digne, comme l’a remarqué saint Chrysostome, eut été le silence.”<sup>64</sup> In a more complete explanation Prado says:

Clarioris instructionis incapaces omnino erant, prout testatur Mc. (4, 33). Hinc ne prorsus instructione destituerentur, neve rursus mysteria Regni imparatis plane revelaret, parabolicam rationem loquendi elegit. Populi ergo caecitas ansam dat parabolis, non vero scopum earum constituit; aliis verbis parabolae non causant caecitatem, sed *propter eam* pronuntiantur.<sup>65</sup>

Buzy himself admits that this verse in Mark means that Christ accommodated His teaching to the capacity of His listeners. And he admits also—and this is really the important point—that the reference is mainly to the intellectual incapacity of the people. He says:

L’intérêt de ce verset porte sur les derniers mots: Καθὼς . . . Maldonat les traduit sans ambage: “idem (ergo) est prout poterant audire, ac si diceret: *prout digni erant*,” et pour lui, à ce moment, ils étaient indignes. . . . Cette interprétation paraît forcée. Prout poterant audire ne signifie pas: suivant qu’ils étaient dignes, mais suivant qu’ils étaient à même de l’entendre. Et si l’on ne doit peut-être pas écarter toute allusion aux dispositions morales, il semble bien que ces mots visent en premier lieu les dispositions intellectuelles.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>62</sup> *Art. cit.*, pp. 210, 211.

<sup>63</sup> *Art. cit.*, p. 210.

<sup>64</sup> *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 103. In reference to Mark iv. 33, 34 Lagrange says elsewhere: “Il leur donnait moins de lumière qu’aux disciples, mais cependant la lumière, celle qui était à leur portée. Ils entendaient un langage qu’ils pouvaient comprendre, et s’ils n’en demandaient pas davantage, c’était leur faute, faute que rentrait dans le plan de Dieu.” “Le but des paraboles d’après l’Évangile selon Saint Marc,” *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 31.

<sup>65</sup> *Novum Testamentum* (Praellectionum Biblicarum Compendium), p. 252.

<sup>66</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 353, 354.

The natural interpretation of Mark iv. 33 is therefore supported by weighty authorities, including Buzy himself. To repeat, we believe that this statement made by St. Mark provides an excellent commentary on Matthew xiii. 13. Christ's words, "This is why I speak to them in parables, because seeing they do not see and hearing they do not hear, neither do they understand," taken in themselves, are open to different interpretations. But their meaning becomes clear when they are considered in the light of the words of Mark, "And in many such parables he spoke the word to them, according as they were able to understand it. . . ." Christ's words mean that He has resolved to accommodate His teaching to the people's deficiency in spiritual vision and perception by speaking to them in a gradual revelation, through the use of parables.

We have now spoken at some length about the meaning of Mark iv. 33 and its bearing on the interpretation of Matthew xiii. 13. If the interpretation of Mark iv. 33 is still considered doubtful, there remains the other, indisputable evidence of the Gospel message. Most important in that evidence, we have said, is that Christ chose the role of merciful Savior while He was an earth, never that of judge, that He exercised His mission exclusively and perseveringly for the Jewish people, and that it is difficult to prove from the Gospels that the Jews were at fault and rejected the teaching of Christ prior to the preaching at the lakeside. This evidence, apart from Mark iv. 33, is sufficient to refute the punishment theory interpretation of verse 13 in St. Matthew's text. The interpretation according to the mercy theory, therefore, is the only acceptable interpretation.<sup>67</sup>

<sup>67</sup> We have considered only v. 13 in the text of Matthew. The complete passage includes vv. 11-15. V. 11 becomes clearer in the light of the parallel verse in Mark (iv. 11) and Mark iv. 33, 34. An excellent commentary on v. 12 is provided by Matt. xxv. 29 where the same proverb is used and where the context makes its meaning clear. See also Mark iv. 24, 25, and the parallel, Luke viii. 18, where the proverb is found again. We can therefore interpret and paraphrase vv. 11 and 12 of Matthew's text as follows. The disciples will attain the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom of God through the parables and private instruction. This knowledge is a gift of God (v. 11), but it is also the reward of the good will of the disciples (v. 12). The people will not attain the knowledge of the mysteries of the kingdom. Christ will instruct

Notice, now, the result of this discussion of the text of St. Matthew's Gospel. Not only has it been proved that the text of Matthew is not a valid argument in favor of the justice theory. We have shown that it provides a positive argument in favor of the pure mercy theory. We did not attempt to find such a positive argument in the text of Mark and Luke. There we proved only that Christ was not indicating the purpose of the parables but was foretelling the fruitless results of His teaching. The text of Mark and Luke, therefore, can be used as an argument by neither the justice theory nor the mercy theory. The text of Matthew, however, is not a neutral witness in regard to the purpose of the parables. It is a positive argument in favor of the mercy theory. Christ Himself tells us that He used the kingdom parables because the people were deficient in spiritual vision and perception. The parables, He implied, were an accommodation to this incapacity of the people. The parables were an element in a gradual revelation—a gradual revelation which, under the circumstances, was the best means that Christ could use to accomplish His desire that all the people accept His teaching about the kingdom of God.

them in parables, but they will not understand His message. Their failure to understand is clearly their own fault (v. 12), but it is permitted by God and therefore, in accordance with Semitic peculiarity of expression, is attributed more directly to God's causality (v. 11).

For the interpretation of vv. 11 and 12 confer also chap. 3, n. 29, above. The significance of the quotation from Isaias in vv. 14, 15 will be explained in the next chapter.

It may be objected against this interpretation of the text of Matthew that it postulates a double reference in our Lord's answer to the disciples—that is, to the *reason* for the use of the kingdom parables (v. 13) and to the *result* of that teaching (vv. 11, 12, 14, 15). It is sufficient to say in reply that it is the general opinion of proponents of both theories that there is a double reference in Christ's statement, and this opinion is founded on the natural interpretation of the texts (cf. especially the ὅτι of Matthew and the ἵνα of Mark and Luke).

## CHAPTER VII

### THE INTERPRETATION OF A DIFFICULT ISAIAS TEXT

THE Synoptic passage which we have just considered involves a quotation from the book of Isaias. Naturally, the fact that another text is being quoted has an important bearing on the interpretation of the passage. Nevertheless, we feel that we are justified in having omitted up to the present practically all reference to the Isaias text. We feel that such reference would only have led to confusion. It is much more simple for us to consider in this separate chapter the Isaias text itself and its bearing on the interpretation of the Synoptic passage.

The Isaias passage is taken from God's message to the prophet, spoken on the occasion when Isaias was first called to his holy office.<sup>1</sup> The text reads:

<sup>1</sup> There is some difference of opinion as to whether this text refers to the first call of Isaias or to a subsequent and particular mission. The dispute is occasioned by the fact that the passage is not found at the beginning of the book of Isaias but does not occur until the sixth chapter. Condamin believes that the passage refers to the first call of the prophet: "Les plus récents exégètes et critiques sont d'accord dans cette interprétation: Knabenbauer, I, pp. 145-148, Vigouroux, Dillmann, Driver, Duhm, etc. En effet, l'appel de Dieu est tout à fait général (v. 8), ainsi que le rôle dont est chargé le prophète (v. 9, 10). De plus l'action symbolique du seraphin qui purifie les lèvres d'Isaïe, pour le rendre digne interprète de Dieu, est semblable à celle qui inaugure le ministère de Jérémie (1, 9), analogue à celle qui met les paroles divines dans la bouche d'Ézéchiél au début de sa mission (Ez. iii. 1, suiv.)." *Isaïe*, p. 44. Kirkpatrick suggests a reason why the passage does not occur until the sixth chapter: "The most probable answer seems to be that it was originally prefixed to a collection of prophecies belonging to the reign of Ahaz which was published separately, and that it was retained in this position when the various subordinate collections were united." *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 153, 154. Tobac goes further and suggests a reason why the account of the call was prefixed to this collection of prophecies belonging to the reign of Achaz. He says: "Il a probablement été composé par Isaïe pour servir de prologue aux prophéties relatives à la guerre syro-éphraïmite. Isaïe est chargé par Dieu de porter au peuple un message d'aveuglement et d'endurcissement; or,

9. And He said:

“Go, and say unto this people:

‘Hear ye indeed, but heed not,

See ye indeed, but perceive not.’

10. Make dull the heart of this people,  
Make deaf their ears, and blind their eyes,  
Lest they see with their eyes,  
And hear with their ears,  
And understand with their hearts,  
And be converted and be healed.”<sup>2</sup>

It is this passage of Isaias that is quoted in the Synoptic text. It is quoted more at length in Matthew and the briefest form is found in Luke. It can readily be seen from a mere reading of the passage how well it serves as an argument for the defenders of the justice theory of the parables. According to the apparent meaning of the passage Isaias’s mission is to be very severe. He is being sent to preach to the people but he is to present his message in such a way that the people will not understand. Further, God’s purpose in bringing about this blindness of the people is indicated. It is to prevent their conversion. Now, Christ uses this text of Isaias in a statement in which He is apparently explaining to the Apostles the purpose of His parable teaching. The argument of the defenders of the justice theory is therefore easily understood: Isaias was sent by God to preach to the people in such a way that they would not understand; Christ is comparing His own parable teaching with the preaching of Isaias; Christ, therefore, means to say that He is using the parables in order to keep the people from understanding His message.

sa prédication eut ce résultat sous Achaz.” “Isaïe,” *DTC*, Vol. VIII, col. 19. The arguments of Condamin seem to be almost conclusive and the explanation of Kirkpatrick and Tobac very acceptable. However, even if the passage pertained only to a particular mission of the prophet, the observations that we shall make in the course of this chapter would not be materially affected.

<sup>2</sup> Isaias vi. 9, 10. וַיֹּאמֶר לֹךְ וְאָמַרְתָּ לָעָם הַזֶּה שְׁמַעוּ שְׁמַעוּ וְאַל תִּבְיִנוּ וּרְאוּ רְאוּ וְאַל-תִּרְדְּעוּ: הַשְׁמֵן לִבֵּיהֶם הוּא וְאָזְנוֹי הִכְבֵּר וְעֵינָיו הִשְׁעַ פֶּן-יִרְאֶה בְּעֵינָיו וּבְאָזְנוֹי יִשְׁמַע וּלְבָבוֹ יִבִּין וְשֵׁב וּרְפָא לוֹ.

We have quoted the translation of Kissane. Cf. The Book of Isaiah, I, 72.

Maldonatus is among those authors who use the Isaias quotation as an argument in support of the justice theory. He first presents his opinion on the purpose of the parables: "Sed non dubito . . . ideo Christum hoc quidem loco parabolis usum fuisse, non ut auditores melius intelligerent, sed ut, qui credere nolebant diserte aperteque loquenti, loquentem per paraboles et obscure, etiam si maxime vellet, intelligere non possent."<sup>3</sup> Continuing, Maldonatus gives his reasons for his view: "Nam et Christus ipse supra v. 12, et Matth. 13, 11.13 hanc, cur parabolis uteretur, rationem reddidit, ut videntes non viderent, et audientes non audirent neque intelligerent. In hanc sententiam testimonium profert Isaias: *Auditu audietis, et non intelligetis, et videntes videbitis, et non videbitis.*"<sup>4</sup> Fonck likewise uses the Isaias quotation in support of the justice theory of the parables. He says of the Isaias passage itself: "The Prophet's words declare quite clearly the *intention*, and not merely the consequences; and the obstinate unbelief and impenitence of the people are plainly enough pointed out in the context as the hypothesis for the penal judgment of God."<sup>5</sup>

It cannot be denied that the Isaias quotation is a strong argument in favor of the justice theory, provided that the rigorist interpretation of the Isaias passage is correct. Further, it must be admitted that the severe interpretation of the Isaias passage is the

<sup>3</sup> *Commentarium in Quatuor Evangelistas*, Tomus I, p. 725.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>5</sup> *The Parables of the Gospel*, p. 41. Skrinjar is willing to admit that God's words to Isaias may have been spoken in irony; but he insists that the prophets' message was still intended as a punishment. "Qu'il s'agisse d'un ordre véritable ou d'une manière ironique de parler, toujours, est-il que Is. vi. 9 nous fait voir que le peuple ne comprendra pas les leçons d'Isaïe, même si les oreilles lui tintent, à force de les entendre, et que Dieu consent à cet effet, qu'il renonce à le prévenir. L'ironie de l'ordre—très sérieuse d'ailleurs—que nous admettons sans difficulté, nous semble même faire ressortir l'idée de la punition. Elle rappelle la faute et montre, comment, par un jugement de Dieu, elle engendre la peine. C'est un peu, comme si l'on disait: 'Eh bien! soit. Restez dans votre aveuglement!' . . . Si quelqu'un ne voit pas d'ironie dans les paroles de Yahweh, mais plutôt l'expression d'une résolution de Dieu, l'idée de châtiement recule au second plan, et c'est l'idée de la part de Dieu dans l'aveuglement de l'homme qui est renforcée." "Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte," *BI*, 1930, pp. 307, 308.

correct interpretation, if we are to consider the passage according to our manner of speaking. The forms used in the text are imperatives—"Make dull the heart of this people, make deaf their ears, and blind their eyes. . . ." And the purpose clause that immediately follows—"lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and be healed"—expresses the direct purpose of God. According to our way of speaking, therefore, the only possible interpretation is that God is sending Isaias to harden the hearts of the people in order to keep them from becoming converted. Consequently, when Christ uses this passage and thereby compares His parable teaching with the preaching of Isaias, He means that the purpose of the parables is to keep the people from understanding and accepting His teaching on the kingdom.

However, the text of Isaias is not to be interpreted according to our manner of speaking. It is to be interpreted according to the manner of speaking of the author of the passage. Therefore, it is to be interpreted according to Semitic modes of expression. We saw in the last chapter that there is a certain peculiarity of Semitic expression according to which the permissive causality of God is sometimes expressed as His direct causality or purpose or intention. We used this principle in the interpretation of the Synoptic text concerned with the purpose of the parables; and we demonstrated the use of the principle also in other texts of Scripture. We believe that this same principle supplies the key to the interpretation of the text of Isaias. The meaning of the passage then becomes quite different. The passage then means that God is foretelling the fruitless results of the prophet's call. This permitted result is expressed as if it were the direct purpose or intention of God.

This interpretation of the Isaias passage in accordance with the peculiarities of Semitic expression is followed by many authors. The classic commentary on the passage is that of Condamin. Taking account of both the peculiarities of Semitic language and the imprecision of Semitic theological concepts, he says:

Il faut tenir compte du langage et de la mentalité sémitiques. Au v. 10a,b,c, les trois verbes sont à la voix *hiphil*; or, en hébreu, la signification *causative* des voix *piel* et *hiphil* . . . comporte bien

des nuances. Ainsi *justifier* quelqu'un, c'est le rendre juste en réalité, ou bien le *déclarer juste*, le rendre tel aux yeux des hommes; *donner la vie, faire vivre*, ce peut être simplement *laisser vivre* quelqu'un, quand on a le pouvoir et des raisons de le faire mourir. . . . Entre le sens *causatif* strict et le sens *permissif*, il existe un sens intermédiaire celui que nous avons ici: *donner occasion* à l'action exprimé par le verbe. La prédication d'Isaïe, vu les mauvaises dispositions de ses auditeurs, sera *l'occasion* de leur endurcissement. Enfin il faut compter avec la conception sémitique qui considère peu les causes secondes, et rapporte volontiers tous les événements à Dieu, cause première et principale. Cette conception est bien servie par la langue qui distingue mal les diverses sortes de causalité: ce que Dieu *permet*, quand il le prévoit et pourrait l'empêcher, il est censé le *faire*: *il endurecit* le coeur du Pharaon, etc. Maintenir partout le sens intentionnel strict de certaines locutions ( *למען* ou *מן* ), en expliquant que, le bien étant un jour tiré du mal, le mal entre ainsi dans le plan providentiel et peut être, en quelque sorte, objet de *l'intention* divine (Knabenbauer, pp. 140, 141), c'est attribuer, semble-t-il, aux Sémites des temps anciens une métaphysique trop savante.<sup>6</sup>

This statement of Condamin, we have said, is the classic commentary on the passage in Isaïas. Buzy, Prat, Huby, and Vosté are among the authors who explicitly refer to Condamin and endorse his interpretation of this text.<sup>7</sup> In his discussion Buzy contrasts our preciseness in speaking of God's causality with the Semite's lack of distinction. He says:

La théologie sémitique néglige avec la même facilité les diverses attitudes de la cause première dans le gouvernement du monde. Pour nous, nous distinguons entre vouloir, désirer, permettre, commander, inviter, conseiller, autoriser, ne pas empêcher, donner occasion; . . . La théologie des Sémites est infiniment plus simpliste. Tout ce qui, de quelque manière, relève du vouloir divin, Dieu le veut, simplement, entièrement. Tout ce qui se produit, Dieu le fait. S'il ne voulait pas une chose,

<sup>6</sup> Isaïe, pp. 45, 46.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Buzy, *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 337; Prat, "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 211; Huby, *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, p. 106; Vosté, *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, p. 159.

cette chose se ferait-elle? Et si elle arrive, cela se peut-il sans l'efficacité divine? Donc, fréquemment la causalité divine emporte tout, éclipse tout, s'épanouit seule au-dessus de tout; et elle-même passe dans ses effets toujours pleine, toujours entière, sans restriction, ni variété d'aspects.<sup>8</sup>

Again, referring to both the text of Isaias and the text of the Synoptics, Buzy says:

Dans ces textes, nous renonçons à atténuer la force des conjonctions *ו* ou *וְ*; nous ne voulons torturer ni un mot ni une lettre. Nous reconnaissons à ces logia les *apparences* les plus rigoristes. Mais nous nous croyons en droit d'adoucir les *pensées*, non pas au nom de la philologie ou de la grammaire, mais au nom de la théologie sémitique qui exprime le simple résultat de la même manière que le but. Isaïe, et par lui Jésus, semblent marquer une "intention," alors qu'ils n'annoncent qu'une prévision; ils donnent les dehors de la causalité à ce qui n'est effectivement qu'une occasion.<sup>9</sup>

The incontestable validity of the Semitic principle with which we are dealing, and the fact that weighty authorities apply this principle in the interpretation of this particular passage of Isaias, prove that the interpretation of this text according to this principle is a possible and acceptable interpretation. The opposite interpretation, therefore, which is the rigorist interpretation, cannot be said to be certain. Now, as in the case of the Synoptic passage, we can go further in determining which is the correct interpretation. If the meaning of a Scripture text is uncertain, its interpretation is to be sought from the context. And, again, by context we mean both the immediate context and the remote context or the message of the rest of Scripture. Now, we believe that the study of the book of Isaias and

<sup>8</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 336, 337.

<sup>9</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 392, 393. The interpretation of the Isaias passage according to Semitic peculiarity of expression is adopted also by Charue and Durand. Cf. Charue, *L'incrédulité des juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, pp. 139, 140; Durand, "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 760. For Skrinjar's admissions in regard to Semitic lack of preciseness in speaking about God's causality and in regard to the various nuances in the meaning of the hiphil form of the Hebrew verb, cf. *art. cit.*, pp. 309, 311.

of the rest of Scripture proves that the mercy theory interpretation of this Isaiah passage is the only acceptable interpretation.

This particular passage occurs in the sixth chapter of the prophet's work. Earlier in the same chapter there is a message of divine revelation which seems opposed to the rigorist interpretation of the words of the call. Isaiah vi. 2, 3, reads: "The Seraphim were standing by Him . . . and one cried to the other and said: 'Holy, holy, holy, is Jahweh of hosts, His glory fills the whole earth.'"<sup>10</sup> This is a description of the heavenly court. The Seraphim are pictured as praising God, and the particular divine attribute being extolled is the infinite holiness of God. This message of revelation, we believe, is opposed to the rigorist interpretation of Isaiah's call. The opposition is between the infinite holiness of God and a direct intention of hardening the hearts of the people in order to prevent their conversion. As Vosté says, referring to the rigorist interpretation of the text: "... primo, tale mandatum foret manifeste contra sanctitatem Dei, qui in eodem capite ter vocatur Sanctus (vi. 3), et qui 'malum culpae, quod privat ordinem ad bonum divinum . . . nullo modo vult,' prout scribit Angelicus Doctor (I, q. 19, ar. 9)."<sup>11</sup> Buzy likewise indicates the extreme opposition between the literal interpretation of the Isaiah passage and the sanctity of God:

Pris à la lettre, ce dernier texte, vv. 9-10, n'est pas moins inexorable pour Dieu que pour l'homme; car, s'il détruit la liberté de l'homme, il ruine encore la sainteté de Dieu. Qu'ordonne, en effet, Iahvé? Qu'à tout prix les yeux des Juifs soient fermés, leurs oreilles bouchées et leurs coeurs endurcis. Et ceci ne s'entend point évidemment d'actes involontaires ou inconscients. Cette obtusion de tous les sens moraux constitue pour les Juifs une faute énorme, dont ils ne doivent pas se relever, et qui demeurera comme un titre éternel de châtement. Mais voici où serait la contradiction: Iahvé, ayant lui-même ordonné cette faute, serait en partie l'auteur du péché, et les Juifs, ayant à répondre d'actions auxquelles ils n'ont pu se soustraire, seraient à la fois responsables et nécessités.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> We have quoted the text according to Kissane's translation. *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. I, p. 71.

<sup>11</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 159.

<sup>12</sup> *Op. cit.*, p. 334. In reference to both the text of Isaiah and the Synop-

Furthermore, the knowledge we have of the actual mission of the prophet is opposed to the justice theory interpretation of his call. The book of Isaiah contains sixty-six chapters and therefore presents sufficient material for us to judge what the actual mission of the prophet was. If Isaiah had been sent by God to harden the hearts of the people, to deafen their ears, and to blind their eyes, we should expect to find abundant evidence of such a severe mission in the contents of the book. Instead, we find there rather evidence of a mission of salvation, mercy, and love. As Charue says:

Toute la vie du prophète proteste contre une interprétation trop sévère et une traduction en langage moderne trop littérale. . . . En résumé, on n'eut pas pu sans doute trouver un plus grand bienfaiteur du peuple dans l'antiquité prophétique, et cependant c'est sa mission qui est décrite comme liée intimement à l'endurcissement de ce même peuple. Ne serait-il pas contradictoire de prétendre que le prophète ne se donnait si totalement à l'oeuvre de conversion de son peuple que pour mieux en assurer l'endurcissement?<sup>13</sup>

Tobac's summary of the work of Isaiah and its results shows also that the mission of the prophet was one of mercy and salvation, difficult though it would be for him to accomplish the beneficent designs of God:

Ainsi, pendant au moins quarante ans, de 740 à 701, Isaïe occupe le poste glorieux mais difficile que lui assigna Jahvé. Il est toujours au premier plan, avertissant, encourageant, menaçant et rassurant tour à tour. Il s'intéresse de très près à toutes les fluctuations de la situation intérieure et extérieure de Juda. Son rôle à la fois politique et religieux fut considérable, son influence tantôt repoussée, tantôt joyeusement acceptée.<sup>14</sup>

tic text Holzmeister says: "Zunächst will niemand annehmen, Christus habe beabsichtigt, die Verstockung direkt herbeizuführen, denn dies würde Gott und seiner Heiligkeit direkt widersprechen. . . . Was von Gott selbst gilt, ist in gleicher Weise vom menschgewordenen Worte Gottes zu behaupten." "Vom angeblichen Verstockungszweck der Parabeln des Herrn," *BI*, 1934 (15), pp. 357, 358.

<sup>13</sup> *L'incrédulité des Juifs dans le Nouveau Testament*, p. 65.

<sup>14</sup> "Isaïe," *DTC*, Vol. VIII, col. 16.

Buzy clearly indicates the opposition between the rigorist interpretation of Isaiah's call and the life and work of the prophet. In reference to the literal interpretation of the text of the call, he says:

Personne ne voudra pousser le littéralisme jusqu'à ces énormités. À défaut de tout l'Ancien Testament, et de ce chapitre même d'Isaïe, qui proclament les attributs du Seigneur trois fois saint, toute la vie du grand prophète protesterait. Isaïe, en effet, a passé devant ses compatriotes, non pas tant armé de foudres, que les mains pleines de bienfaits. Comme le dit le P. Knabenbauer, 'il exposerà la vérité, enseignera les lois de Dieu, morigenera les recalcitrants et les cœurs durs.' . . . Mais Isaïe n'est qu'un prédicateur de morale sévère, le champion de Iahvé, l'ami du pieux Ezéchias. Dans l'intérêt de son Dieu et de son peuple, il prononce les discours les plus éloquents de la littérature hébraïque, qu'il appuie des miracles les plus beaux peut-être de tout le prophétisme: prodige du cadran solaire, guérison d'Ezéchias, destruction de l'armée de Sennacherib, délivrance de Jérusalem. En un mot, la mission d'Isaïe n'est qu'une plus abondante démonstration de la bonté, de la paternité de Dieu.<sup>15</sup>

<sup>15</sup> *Op. cit.*, pp. 334, 335. Buzy's reference is to Knabenbauer's *Commentarius in Isaiam Prophetam*, I, p. 139. The text in Knabenbauer reads: "Debet scil. veritatem proponere, Dei normam et leges assiduo docere, monere recalcitrantes, increpare duros animos, iudicia Dei et castigationes illis denuntiare; . . ." Contrasting the real purpose of Isaiah's mission with its actual results, Buzy says: "Le prophète a mission de répandre des discours et des miracles qui, dans le dessein de Dieu et de leur nature, tendent à la conversion des Juifs; ceux-ci n'en profiteront pas; ils achèveront même, à leur occasion, de consommer et de manifester la malice de leur cœur; et ainsi, par leur faute, mais par leur faute seule, des moyens de miséricorde seront changés en instruments de perdition. Ce malheur est praeter intentionem, non praeter praevisionem divinam; c'est un résultat, nullement un but; mais le résultat est exprimé avec la force d'un but. . . ." *Op. cit.*, p. 338. Skrinjar admits that the message of Isaiah is, in great part a message of God's love and solicitude for His people: "Certes, les prophéties d'Isaïe, considérées en soi, contiennent en grande partie des appels d'amour, des réprimandes paternelles." He admits further that God actually wished this merciful mission, but he goes on to say that this wish was not efficacious: "Ce plan miséricordieux, Isaïe pouvait le vouloir, et Dieu même le voulait mais pas efficacement, bien qu'il le voulût positivement, tandis que le plan de justice est un plan efficace et, pour autant, supérieur, quand même le péché n'y est pas directement voulu." *Art. cit.*, p. 311.

The actual teaching and mission of Isaiah, therefore, is opposed to the rigorist interpretation of the words of his call. From a more aprioristic point of view, the justice theory interpretation of the Isaiah passage is opposed to the very function of Isaiah as a prophet of the Old Testament. Now, among the prophets Isaiah occupies the first place. As Kirkpatrick says: "He is indeed the king among the prophets. . . . Isaiah towers above all the other prophets, before and after."<sup>16</sup> Yet the rigorist interpretation of the call of Isaiah would represent his mission as opposed to that of all the other prophets of the Old Testament.

The prophets of the Old Testament were primarily God's spokesmen before the people. They were intent, first of all, on reform, on promoting and elevating the moral and religious life of the nation.<sup>17</sup> It is not too much to say that all their efforts were directed toward the preparation of the nation of Israel for the advent of the Messianic era. As Maas says, summarizing the function of the prophets of the Old Testament:

St. Paul (1 Cor. xiv. 3) has well summed up the prophetic functions and characteristics: "He that prophesieth," the apostle says, "speaketh to men unto edification and exhortation and comfort." Unto edification the prophets speak to men when as divinely inspired theologians they teach the people what to believe and what to do in order to insure their eternal salvation. Unto exhortation the prophets speak when they pour forth their powerful and efficacious pleadings in order to soften and move men's hearts. Unto comfort finally do the prophets speak when

<sup>16</sup> *The Doctrine of the Prophets*, pp. 141, 171. After speaking of the scene of Isaiah's activity, Tobac says: "C'est sur ce théâtre que se déroulera l'activité du plus grand des prophètes." "Isaïe," *DTC*, Vol. VIII, col. 17. Durand refers to Isaiah as ". . . le plus grand de tous. . . ." "Pourquoi Jésus Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 760. Ermoni: "Isaïe est incontestablement le plus grand des prophètes, soit à cause de l'importance de ses révélations, soit à cause des qualités de son style." "Isaïe," *DDL*, Vol. III, col. 945. For the opinion of the Fathers as to the place of Isaiah among the prophets, cf. Souvay, "Isaïas," *CE*, Vol. VIII, p. 184.

<sup>17</sup> Nötscher: "Die religiöse Gedankenwelt des Alten Testaments findet ihren vollkommensten Ausdruck in den Reden der Propheten." *Das Buch Jeremias*, p. v.

they predict the future glory of the chosen people, and the rejection of the gentile world, the end of the Old Dispensation, and the approaching establishment of the Church.<sup>18</sup>

Indicating that prediction was not the first work of the prophets and defining their true function, Gigot says:

The *Seer* or *Prophet* of that period (i. e., the Royal Period)—as indeed of any period in Jewish history—was neither necessarily nor exclusively a man endowed with supernatural insight into the future, and hence able to foretell far distant events. . . . His was the mission of declaring God's will, of announcing God's judgments, of defending truth and righteousness and innocence, of keeping alive the constant intercourse between God and His chosen people, of making of Israel's religion a moral and spiritual religion, of opposing sternly idolatry and promoting energetically public compliance with the Divine law and ultimately of preparing by all this the nation at large for the coming of the Messiah who was "the end of the law" (Rom. x. 4).<sup>19</sup>

The prophets of the Old Testament, then, were primarily God's spokesmen before the people. They were primarily religious teachers and reformers. It was their function to urge reform among the people, to impart to them God's revelation, to console the people in time of affliction, and to warn them of impending disaster. To say, then, that Isaias' mission was in itself a punishment would be to set the function of the greatest of the prophets completely at

<sup>18</sup> *Christ in Type and Prophecy*, Vol. I, p. 87.

<sup>19</sup> *Outlines of Jewish History*, p. 273. Condamin likewise says of the prophet of the Old Testament: "De la part de Dieu, il condamne les pratiques idolâtriques, il menace les impies et annonce le châtement, il exhorte à la pénitence et à la justice; il s'élève contre tout ce qui peut compromettre la destinée religieuse du peuple élu; il réproouve, en général, les alliances politiques avec les nations païennes. Dans les dangers il prêche la confiance en Iahvé, il prédit la délivrance et le triomphe d'Israël, le règne du Messie, la conversion des peuples à la religion du vrai Dieu. Son rôle peut donc se résumer en deux mots: prédication et prédiction." "Prophétisme Israélite," *DAFC*, Vol. IV, col. 387. Cf. also Kirkpatrick, *op. cit.*, pp. 13-15; Calès, "Prophecy, Prophet, and Prophetess," *CE*, Vol. 12, p. 477; Lagrange, *Le Judaïsme avant Jésus Christ*, pp. 72, 73; Mangelot, "Prophète," *DDLB*, Vol. V, col. 710; Barton, "The Religion of the Hebrew Prophets," *SCR*, Vol. III, No. 18, pp. 4, 5.

variance with the mission of the prophets who preceded or followed him. The rigorist interpretation of the call of Isaiah—that the prophet was sent to harden the hearts of the people, to preach so that they would not understand—must therefore be rejected.

There is another argument, taken also from the text of Scripture, which can be advanced to refute the rigorist interpretation of the Isaiah text. It is the use of this passage in two pericopes of the New Testament. The New Testament passages to which we refer are found in the Gospel of St. John (xii. 37 ff.) and in the Acts of the Apostles (xxviii. 23 ff.). In these passages St. John and St. Paul quote the words of the call of Isaiah. Now, in both these instances we know the thought that the authors wish to express. The fact that they use the Isaiah passage to express this thought shows what their interpretation of the Isaiah passage must be. That interpretation, in both cases, is the mercy theory interpretation.

The passage in St. John's Gospel is concerned, as is the Synoptic passage which we considered in the last chapter, with the incredulity of the Jews. The reference in the fourth Gospel, however, is not to the teaching of Christ but to His miracles. John first mentions that the Jews do not believe in Christ in spite of the many miracles He has performed: "Now though he had worked so many signs in their presence, they did not believe in Him. . . ." Then St. John apparently gives the reason why the Jews do not believe in our Lord: "This is why they could not believe, because Isaiah said again, 'He has blinded their eyes, and hardened their hearts; lest they should see with their eyes, and understand with their hearts, and be converted, and I should heal them.' " <sup>20</sup>

Leaving this text aside for just a moment, let us consider what thought St. John must be expressing in regard to the incredulity of the Jews. In other words, what is St. John's opinion in regard to the purpose of the miracles, their evidential value, and the culpability of the Jews in rejecting these divine credentials? His opinion must be the same as that of his divine Master. Now, Christ clearly

<sup>20</sup> John xii. 39, 40: διὰ τοῦτο οὐκ ἠδύναντο πιστεῦειν, ὅτι πάλιν εἶπεν Ἡσαΐας· Τετύφλωκεν αὐτῶν τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς καὶ ἐπώρρωσεν αὐτῶν τὴν καρδίαν, ἵνα μὴ ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ νοήσωσιν τῇ καρδίᾳ καὶ στραφῶσιν, καὶ ἰάσονται αὐτούς.

indicated that the miracles were sufficient evidence of His divine authority and that the Jews were morally culpable in rejecting this testimony. He said on one occasion: "The witness, however, that I have is greater than that of John. For the works which the Father has given me to accomplish, these very works that I do bear witness to me, that the Father has sent me" (John v. 36). Again, "If I do not perform the works of my Father, do not believe me. But if I do perform them, and if you are not willing to believe me, believe the works, that you may know and believe that the Father is in me and I in the Father" (John x. 37, 38).<sup>21</sup> As Lebreton says, in reference to the culpability of the Jews in rejecting the evidence of Christ's miracles:

... And if it be asked if we are to conclude from this that miracles have no evidential force, the answer is: Certainly not; since those who witnessed them without yielding to their testimony are without excuse. "If I had not done among them the works that no other man hath done, they would not have sin: but now they have both seen and hated both Me and My Father" (John xv. 24). Christ's works were luminous in their appeal, and those who were not convinced by them were blind and wilfully blind at that. "If you were blind you should not have sin; but now you say we see. Your sin remaineth" (ix. 41). This teaching of our Lord helps us to understand the mystery, at first so puzzling, of a blindness thus obstinate in the face of evident facts. It shows us plainly that no miracles can be clear enough to force belief on one who does not wish to believe, loving darkness rather than light; and yet they are clear enough in themselves, furnishing sufficiently certain proofs to put a responsibility upon those before whom they take place.<sup>22</sup>

We know, then, what the thought of Christ was in regard to the value of the miracles and the rejection of these signs by the Jews. The thought of St. John must be the same. His opinion must be that the miracles were clear signs of Christ's divine authority, and that the Jews were morally culpable in rejecting these signs. Now let us return to St. John's text itself. There can be no doubt that

<sup>21</sup> Cf. also, e. g., Matt. ix. 5 ff.; xi. 2-6; Luke vii. 19-23; John xiv. 10-12.

<sup>22</sup> *The Life and Teaching of Jesus Christ our Lord*, Vol. II, pp. 438, 439.

this text, considered according to our way of speaking, is opposed to the teaching of Christ. If we interpret the text according to our manner of speaking, the meaning is this: The people have not been converted by the miracles because they were not able to believe; and they were not able to believe because God blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts; and God intentionally blinded their eyes and hardened their hearts in order that they might not see and believe and be converted. More briefly, the people could not possibly accept the evidence of the miracles because God blinded their eyes and thereby prevented their belief. However, once again, the text is not to be interpreted according to our way of speaking. It is to be interpreted according to the Semitic manner of speaking. And, here again, the same peculiarity of Semitic expression that we have found to be the key to the interpretation of other Scripture texts provides the correct solution. God's permissive causality is being expressed as His direct causality or intention. The text of St. John thus becomes a statement of the permitted result of the miracles of Christ. The culpability of the Jews in rejecting these evident signs of Christ's authority remains.

To summarize our argument thus far: Knowing what the opinion of Christ was in regard to the culpability of the Jews in rejecting His miracles, we know also the opinion of St. John; peculiarity of Semitic expression explains how St. John is actually expressing this idea, even though the text would seem to indicate the contrary.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>23</sup> Buzy compares John's quotation from Isaiah with the quotation as found in Matthew and Mark; and he explains the text of John in accordance with Semitic peculiarity of expression. "Enfin, si l'on cherche de qui saint Jean se rapproche le plus, de saint Marc ou de saint Matthieu, on a vite fait de constater une grande affinité entre le quatrième Évangéliste et le deuxième. Chez tous les deux, l'endurcissement semble inopiné; aucun ne nous avertit que ce malheur puisse être un châtement; et le lecteur qui veut en scruter les causes, no découvre dans ces logia que l'implacable et souveraine volonté de Dieu, s'appesantissant sur les destinées de ce peuple. La conception de saint Jean est donc soeur de celle de saint Marc. Nous croyons inutile de répéter une fois de plus que sa rigueur apparente est due aux formules de la théologie sémitique." *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, pp. 281, 282.

Prat also supports this interpretation of the text of St. John. Cf. *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, pp. 343, 344. Cf. also Grandmaison, *Jesus Christ*, Vol. II, p. 37, n. 4.

Now, the fact that St. John uses the Isaias passage in expressing this idea shows how he understands that text. He interprets the words of Isaias' call as a prediction of the permitted result of the message of the prophet. The responsibility and culpability of the people who would reject this message remains. The people, in other words, would wilfully and culpably reject a message which was actually intended for their salvation.

The passage in the Acts of the Apostles is further evidence against the rigorist interpretation of the Isaias text. In this instance it is St. Paul who quotes the text. St. Paul is in Rome; and according to his custom he has preached first to the Jews of the city. His efforts have been largely unsuccessful. He therefore says to the people who have rejected his teaching:

Well did the Holy Spirit speak through Isaias the prophet to our fathers, saying, "Go to this people and say: With the ear you will hear and will not understand; and seeing you will see and will not perceive. For the heart of this people has become gross, and with their ears they have been hard of hearing, and their eyes they have shut; lest perhaps they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and turn back and I should heal them." (Acts 28:25-27.)<sup>24</sup>

There can be no doubt what St. Paul's thoughts are in regard to the Jews' rejection of his teaching. St. Paul is now in Rome. He has spent approximately twenty-five years in missionary activity, an activity that has taken him on three long journeys. He has not limited his mission to the pagans. Rather has he directed his efforts first toward the conversion of the Jews. Wherever he has gone, in all the many communities, he has always followed the same procedure. He has always sought out the Jews first. Only when the Jews rejected him did he turn to the pagan population in the various communities he visited. After many years, during which he has al-

<sup>24</sup> We need not quote the Greek text. As Vosté says: "Heic, sicut apud Matthaeum, verbotenus citatur Isaias iuxta versionem graecam LXX." *Parabola Selectae Domini Nostri Iesu Christi*, Vol. I, p. 128. We have already quoted the Greek text of Matthew (chap. VI), and soon we shall have occasion to quote the Greek of the Septuagint.

ways met with the same rejection from the Jews, Paul reaches Rome. Again he preaches first to the Jews. The text itself tells us—just previous to the passage we have just quoted: “. . . to them he explained the matter, bearing witness to the kingdom of God and trying from morning till evening to convince them concerning Jesus from the Law of Moses and from the Prophets” (Acts 28:23). When the Jews of Rome rejected his teaching, Paul spoke to them in the words of Isaias. Certainly, Paul can have only one thought. The Jews have culpably rejected the message of salvation. They have blinded their eyes, deafened their ears, and hardened their hearts. They have thus prevented their own conversion. To put any other thought in the mind of St. Paul at this time would be to show oneself completely ignorant of his whole life and activity. Now, if St. Paul chose to express this thought in the words of the call of Isaias, he must have interpreted that Isaias text as containing this thought—that the Jews would deliberately and culpably reject the message of salvation.<sup>25</sup>

The text of Isaias, therefore, when studied in the light of the rest of the book of the prophet and of the rest of the message of Scripture can be interpreted in only one sense. God is foretelling the fruitless results of the preaching of the prophet. Since this result is permitted by God, it is expressed, in accordance with Semitic habits of expression, as the direct purpose of God.

<sup>25</sup> Skrinjar admits that this text in the Acts interprets Isaias' words as a prediction or description of the blindness of the Jews and that the blindness is not attributed to God's causality. “Les LXX effacent complètement la part de Dieu; d'après eux, Dieu ne fait que prédire ou décrire l'aveuglement des Juifs. Les citations *in extenso* de Mt. et Act. reproduisent exactement le texte des LXX. L'action de Dieu disparaît dans Mt. 13 même au v. 13, où St. Matthieu abrège les paroles de Dieu, avant de les citer mot à mot. Mc. et Joh. gardent le mieux l'idée rigoriste.” “Le but des paraboles sur le règne et l'économie des lumières divines d'après l'Écriture Sainte,” *BI*, 1930, pp. 306, 307.

Referring to the use of the Isaias text by our Lord and St. Paul, Prat says: “Et Jésus, tout comme saint Paul, rappelle justement ce text au moment où il multiplie les exhortations pour vaincre la résistance obstinée des Juifs. Ce text n'exprime donc pas un décret absolu de la volonté divine qui ôterait aux hommes tout espoir de conversion, mais l'annonce prophétique de leur aveuglement effectif.” *Jésus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 342.

Besides the explanation that has been presented thus far, other explanations are advanced to interpret the Isaias text in accordance with the mercy theory. Lagrange, for example, maintains that the words are used in irony.<sup>26</sup> Isaias, he says, was actually being sent on a merciful mission. But God foresaw that the people would reject the preaching of the prophet. This foreseen obstinacy of the people aroused God's holy indignation; and when He spoke to Isaias He gave vent to His anger and disappointment.

In the time of Isaias, as in the time of Jesus, God willed to save His people, as is shown by the fact that He raised up a preacher and charged him to call the people to repentance, bidding him to call them with words that are impassioned, full of tenderness, yet at the same time threatening, so that every means might be used which would obtain the result desired, namely, the people's conversion. That this was God's purpose is evident: it follows from the very language He employs, which is clear, urgent, compelling the Israelites to make their choice. That choice, however, is foreseen, and it will drag them to destruction. Go, then, said the Lord to His envoy, with the angry bitterness of love doomed to disappointment: go and speak to them that they may harden their hearts and may not be pardoned.<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> We have already noted that Durand explains the Isaias text in accordance with Semitic peculiarity of expression. However, he also offers an alternative solution, based on the supposition that the words of the prophet's call were said in irony. Cf. "Pourquoi Jésus-Christ a parlé en paraboles," *Études*, 1906 (107), p. 760. Gould: "It is only ironically that God commands the prophet to harden the people by his pungent preaching, because he sees that this will be the inevitable result." *The Gospel according to St. Mark*, p. 73.

<sup>27</sup> *The Gospel of Jesus Christ*, Vol. I, p. 180. Lagrange offers the same solution for the Synoptic text: "This method of teaching by parables, a method inspired by mercy, adapted to the capacity of uneducated minds and throwing as much light as their state of mind allowed them to perceive, was not at present intended as a punishment. But the time came when that punishment was deserved, and then their disregard of His goodness added another reason to those which drew down justice upon them in place of the mercy He had offered. This is what Jesus already knew beforehand and what the evangelists have recorded. And God, foreseeing all, had therefore said to the Messiah what He had once said to Isaias, full of divine anger because of His slighted love: 'Speak in such a way that they will not understand. Shed so much light that they may be blinded by it.'" *Ibid.*, p. 182.

Still another explanation of the Isaiah text is proposed. This explanation is based on a change in the meaning of the forms used in the text. Kissane, for example, would consider the Hebrew imperatives as equivalent to simple indicatives. The consequence is that in the very terms themselves there is a prediction of the results of Isaiah's preaching. Verse 9 reads: "And He said: 'Go, and say unto this people: "Hear ye indeed, but heed not; see ye indeed, but perceive not."'" Kissane comments on the words: "Hear ye indeed, but heed not; see ye indeed, but perceive not":

It is obvious that we are not to take the words literally as the actual words to be used by the prophet. The imperatives are really equivalent to indicatives—"you hear . . . you see" (cf. Joüon, 114 p.; Ges.-K. 110c-f). In a similar context in xxix. 9 we find the same idiomatic use of the imperative: 'stupefy yourselves and be stupid, blind yourselves and be blind' (cf. viii. 9). The meaning is: Ye have heard Jahweh's revelation of His law, and ye have seen His works which are the proof that He alone is God, yet ye refuse to obey His law or acknowledge His dominion.<sup>28</sup>

Verse 10—which, of course, is the more important verse—reads: "Make dull the heart of this people, make deaf their ears, and blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and be healed." Kissane's commentary is as follows:

10. Prophecy of the failure of the prophet's mission. . . . Here also the imperatives are equivalent to indicatives (futures). The people will become so spiritually insensitive that they will no longer understand the teaching of the prophet. His words will sound like a foreign tongue (xxix. 11). It is implied that by repentance the people may yet avert the threatened ruin (cf. i. 18ff).<sup>29</sup>

<sup>28</sup> *The Book of Isaiah*, Vol. I, p. 75.

<sup>29</sup> *Ibid.* It is to be noted that even in this explanation, which would change the meaning of the forms themselves, we must ultimately have recourse to Semitic peculiarity of expression. The text, with the changes made, would read: "You will make dull the heart of this people, and will make deaf their ears, and you will blind their eyes, lest they see with their eyes, and hear with

This last interpretation, based on changing the meaning of the forms in the text, finds considerable support in the text of Scripture itself. It is supported by the Septuagint translation of the passage, and also by the quotation of the passage in St. Matthew's Gospel (13:14, 15) and in the Acts of the Apostles (28:26, 27). In these three places the forms are not found in the imperative but in the indicative. The Septuagint reads:

And He said, "Go, and say to this people: 'Ye shall hear indeed, but ye shall not understand; and ye shall see indeed, but ye shall not perceive.' For the heart of this people has become gross, and their ears are dull of hearing, and their eyes have they closed; lest they should see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and be converted, and I should heal them."<sup>30</sup>

The quotation of the Isaias passage in St. Matthew's Gospel and in the Acts of the Apostles follows the reading of the Septuagint. Therefore there is no need for us to repeat these New Testament passages.<sup>31</sup> From a mere reading of these texts in the Septuagint and in the New Testament the following conclusions are obvious: that the Hebrew imperatives are sometimes rendered as future indicatives and sometimes as aorist indicatives; that the blindness of the people and their hardness of heart is ascribed to their own fault;

their ears, and understand with their hearts, and be converted and be healed." Now, according to our way of speaking, this text still means that Isaias—and therefore God Who is sending the prophet—will be the direct cause of the blindness of the people, and that the direct purpose of God will be to prevent the conversion of the people. But, interpreted according to Semitic modes of expression, the text really is a prediction of the fruitless results of the prophet's preaching; and these results are expressed as due to the direct causality of God, and even as His direct purpose, because they are permitted by Him.

<sup>30</sup> The Greek text, according to Swete, *The Old Testament in Greek*, Vol. III, p. 111, reads: καὶ εἶπεν Πορεύθητι καὶ εἰπὼν τῷ λαῷ τούτῳ Ἄκοῃ ἀκούσετε καὶ οὐ μὴ συνῆτε, καὶ βλέποντες βλέψετε καὶ οὐ μὴ ἴδητε. ἐπαχύνθη γὰρ ἡ καρδία τοῦ λαοῦ τούτου, καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν αὐτῶν βαρέως ἤκουσαν καὶ τοὺς ὀφθαλμοὺς ἐκάμμυσαν, μὴ ποτε ἴδωσιν τοῖς ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ τοῖς ὠσὶν ἀκούσωσιν, καὶ τῇ καρδίᾳ συνῶσιν καὶ ἐπιστρέψωσιν, καὶ ἰάσομαι αὐτούς.

<sup>31</sup> Cf. note 24 above.

and that, consequently, the prevention of their conversion is described as their own intention. These passages, therefore, support in a direct and particular way the explanation that would change the meaning of the forms in the Isaias text; while, in a more general way, they support the mercy theory interpretation of the passage, regardless of what particular analysis of the text is preferred.<sup>32</sup>

We have now presented the various ways of explaining the Isaias text in accordance with the mercy theory. As our treatment has indicated, we prefer the explanation that interprets the text in the light of Semitic peculiarity of expression.

Let us recall now the significance of this mercy theory interpretation of the text of Isaias. We noted at the beginning of this chapter that the justice theory of the parables finds an argument in the fact that Christ quotes this Isaias passage. The argument, we pointed out, depends on the rigorous interpretation of the call of the prophet, namely, that the prophet was being sent by God to speak to the people in such a way that they would not understand his message. We have shown that this rigorous interpretation of the Isaias passage is not acceptable. Consequently, the argument of the justice theory falls—it falls with the premise upon which it depends. But now we can go further. The Isaias passage can now be used as a positive argument in favor of the pure mercy theory of the parables. By quoting the Isaias text our Lord compares His parable teaching with the preaching of the prophet. The preaching of the prophet was intended for the conversion of the people; and the fruitless results of the preaching were due to the obstinacy of the people. In the same way, the parable teaching of our Lord was intended for the instruction and salvation of the people; and the fruitless results of that teaching were due entirely to the fault of the people. As Rose says, speaking of Christ's use of the kingdom parables:

He wished above all to put His doctrine within reach of His hearers, who, materialistic though they were, were eager to understand Him. The allusion to the mission of Isaias (Isaias vi) to harden the hearts and blind the eyes of the people, far from

<sup>32</sup> Cf. note 25 above for Skrinjar's admission.

contradicting this interpretation, seems rather to confirm it. Yahweh orders His prophet to make one last effort to bring back His wandering people. If this supreme attempt, accompanied by severe threats, be unsuccessful, then blindness will follow of itself. So it is in our case. If the crowd does not understand the mystery of Jesus offered under the clear form of the parable, nothing can be hoped of it; then it is hardened, blinded, reprobate. According to the intention of Jesus, the parabolic instruction was therefore an act of love and divine condescension, and not an act of reprobation.<sup>33</sup>

<sup>33</sup> *Studies on the Gospels*, p. 112, note. Prat: "Le parallèle avec la mission d'Isaïe montre bien que l'enseignement en paraboles fut un effort désespéré pour tirer les masses, tour à tour enthousiastes et volages, de leur torpeur et de leur inaction." "Nature et but des paraboles évangéliques," *Études*, 1913 (135), p. 205. In a very comprehensive statement Huby says: "Dans Isaïe, comme le remarque le R. P. Condamin, le sens est que 'la prédication du prophète, vu les mauvaises dispositions de ses auditeurs, sera l'occasion de leur endurcissement.' De même ici la prédication du Christ est une occasion d'endurcissement pour des auditeurs volontairement aveugles. . . . Cette incrédulité, fruit de la mauvaise volonté, Jésus l'a prévue et la citation d'Isaïe constate le résultat prédit et permis. Saint Paul aigra de même, quand après avoir annoncé aux juifs de Rome, pendant un jour entier, l'avènement du Règne de Dieu, il verra un groupe de ses auditeurs se retirer incrédule. Comme Jésus sur le bords du lac de Galilée, il citera le texte d'Isaïe pour constater l'endurcissement volontaire et coupable d'Israël." *Évangile selon Saint Marc*, pp. 106, 107.

## CHAPTER VIII

### SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

THE discussion of the Isaias text and its bearing on the interpretation of the Synoptic passage brings our study of the purpose of the kingdom parables to a close. In brief resume, let us now re-trace the course along which we have proceeded.

Our study has been presented in two distinct sections. In the first section (chs. 1 to 4) we explained the purpose of the parables purely from a positive point of view. This part of our discussion amounted to an explanation of the mercy theory of the parables. In the second section (chs. 5 to 7) we presented and endeavored to refute the objections brought against the mercy theory by the proponents of the justice theory.

In chapter one we recalled that the parable was a popular method of teaching at the time of Christ. We saw that the parable is simple in itself, but that it can become obscure through certain accidental circumstances. A parable will thus be found obscure if the lesson being illustrated is difficult in itself or is rendered difficult by preconceived and opposed notions of the listeners. In chapter two we explained the opposition that prevailed at the time of Christ between His Messianic ideas and those of the Jews. This opposition was basically a contrast of the spiritual and the material. Because of this opposition in Messianic concept Christ was not able to present a clear, simple and direct teaching about the kingdom of God. He chose the wiser, more merciful method of gradual revelation. In chapter three we showed how ideally the kingdom parables were suited to be an element in this gradual revelation. Whatever obscurity the people found in these parables was due, not to the parables themselves, but to the sublime nature of the lesson Christ was teaching and, even more, to the preconceived Messianic ideas of the people. In chapter four we endeavored to confirm from the Gospels the basis upon which the mercy theory rests, i. e., the opposition

between Christ's Messianic ideas and those of the Jews and the consequent need of a gradual revelation.

In chapter five we explained the justice theory of the parables. We observed that all those who hold this theory modify the harshness of their theory by emphasizing in various ways the mercy and goodness of our Lord. In reference to a certain group of authors, we attempted to prove that even though they speak of punishment and of the fault of the Jews their theory is better described as the pure mercy theory. In chapter six we examined the main argument of the justice theory, namely, the Synoptic text wherein Christ apparently explains why He used the kingdom parables. We saw that the text in Mark and Luke cannot be used as an argument by either theory, while the text in Matthew serves as a positive argument in favor of the mercy theory. In chapter seven we examined the second argument of the justice theory, the fact that our Lord quotes Isaias. We saw that ultimately this quotation from Isaias is really a positive argument in favor of the mercy theory of the parables. In considering both these objections of the justice theory, that is, the Synoptic text itself and the fact that the passage quotes the words of the call of Isaias, our argument was the same. In each case we showed that, when just the text itself is considered, an interpretation in accordance with the mercy theory is permissible. This first step in our argument was proved by having recourse to Semitic peculiarity of expression in reference to God's causality. The second step was to show that in the light of the context the mercy theory interpretation is the only acceptable interpretation.

Obviously, our own conclusion from this study is that the mercy theory of the parables is the correct solution. However, we do not mean to say that this question of the purpose of the kingdom parables is simple and easy, and that there are no arguments that can reasonably be advanced in favor of the justice theory. We would rather repeat the words of Buzy: "Avec tous ceux qui se sont occupés de ce problème, nous ne faisons pas difficulté de reconnaître que le but des paraboles est une des questions les plus déconcertantes, peut-être la plus déconcertante de tout l'Évangile."<sup>1</sup> Lagrange like-

<sup>1</sup> *Introduction aux Paraboles évangéliques*, p. 231.

wise says: "Le problème du but des paraboles est des plus délicats; . . . " <sup>2</sup> In the course of the same article Lagrange wisely observes: "Lorsque les exégètes sont divisés, depuis si longtemps, sur une question aussi grave, on peut bien supposer qu'il y a, dans le texte même, des raisons d'opiner pour ou contre." <sup>3</sup> At the conclusion of the article, Legrange makes this humble admission: "Sur aucun point d'ailleurs on ne prétend avoir fourni des solutions définitives et indiscutables." <sup>4</sup>

Nevertheless, we do think that there is one unqualified conclusion that can be drawn from this study of the purpose of the parables: the absolute mercy theory has many strong and positive arguments in its favor, and there is no objection to which it cannot give a reasonably acceptable answer.

<sup>2</sup> "Le but des paraboles d'après l'Évangile selon Saint Marc," *RB*, 1910 (VII), p. 35.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 32.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 35.



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## ABBREVIATIONS

BI—*Biblica*.

CBQ—*Catholic Biblical Quarterly*.

CE—*Catholic Encyclopedia*.

DAFC—*Dictionnaire Apologétique de la Foi Catholique*.

DDLB—*Dictionnaire de la Bible* (Vigouroux).

DDLB-SUPPL—*Dictionnaire de la Bible, Supplément* (Pirot).

DTC—*Dictionnaire de Théologie Catholique*.

HDB—*Dictionary of the Bible* (Hastings).

HDCG—*Dictionary of Christ and the Gospels* (Hastings).

ICC—*International Critical Commentary*.

MPG—Migne, *Patrologiae Series Graeca*.

MPL—Migne, *Patrologiae Series Latina*.

RB—*Revue Biblique*.

SCR—*Studies in Comparative Religion*.



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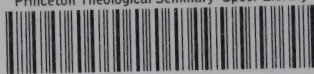
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